The Way of Tao, Volume 1

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CHAPTER 1

The eternal, unchanging tao

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THE ABSOLUTE TAO

THE TAO THAT CAN BE TRODDEN IS NOT THE ENDURING

AND UNCHANGING TAO. THE NAME THAT CAN BE NAMED

IS NOT THE ENDURING AND UNCHANGING NAME.

Those who have known, not by words, not by scriptures but by actually living life, from amongst those very few, Lao Tzu is one. And from amongst those yet fewer persons, who having known, have ceaselessly endeavoured to reveal what they have known, Lao Tzu is one. But the very first experience of those enlightened ones, who have tried to express what they have known is, that: whatever is expressible is not Truth. That which can assume form, invariably loses its spiritual power (of the Formless).

Now if someone wishes to make a picture of the sky, this can never be. Whatever picture is made, it will not be of the sky, for space is that which embodies everything. A picture cannot contain anything; it, in itself is surrounded by space. So Truth expressed in words, will be like the skies depicted in a picture. No bird can fly in the sky of a picture, no sun comes out in the morning or stars at night. It is dead for all purposes and the sky only in name. The sky cannot be in a picture. The greatest difficulty that a person encounters when he sets forth to express Truth is, that no sooner Truth is converted into words, it becomes Un-Truth. It becomes just what it is not. Then what was to be conveyed, remains unsaid; and what was not to be conveyed, is given voice. Lao Tzu starts his very first line with this statement.

Tao is a peerless word. Try to understand its full meaning so we can proceed with ease. There are many meanings of Tao. The deeper a thing becomes, the more meanings it develops; and when a thing becomes multi-dimensional, it is but natural that it becomes more intricate. One interpretation of Tao is: "The Way." But, all paths are bound and fixed! What sort of a path is Tao? It is like the path that a bird makes; in the skies as it flies – the path is formed but it is not fixed. All other paths leave their marks behind, which makes it easy for others to follow. Tao is a path like the bird makes in the skies – there are no footprints left behind for the convenience of others to follow. If we visualize a path that is unconstructed, a path where there are no footprints, a path that no other person can create for you – you travel and as you travel the path is formed – then we can interpret Tao as: 'The Way'. But such a path we see nowhere! Therefore, is it proper to call Tao – 'The Way'?

This however, is one dimension of Tao. Now let us take another meaning of the Path. A path is that which takes us to a destination. A path is that which joins us to the destination. But Tao is not such a path. When we walk along a road and reach the destination, both the road and the destination are connected to each other. In fact the destination is the last end of the road and the road is the beginning of the destination. Therefore, the path and the goal are not two different things – they are joined allied to one another. The road cannot be without a destination, nor can the destination be without a road. But Tao is a path that is tied to no destination. When a destination is connected with a path, the length of the journey is known. So the traveller knows the distance to the destination. But Tao is such a path where the traveller attains his destination at the very place he stands! Therefore, Tao cannot be likened to the general concept of a path. It is a path where we attain the destination from the very place we stand upon. It can also be that we travel for millions of births and not attain it. Invariably then, Tao is a different kind of a path. So one meaning of Tao is 'The Path' but in a very intrinsic sense – and with very many conditions.

Another interpretation of Tao is 'Religion'. But Religion not in the sense that we generally understand. Religion here is what the ancient Rishis meant. Religion means the Regulation that holds all within itself. The Ultimate Law that holds all Existence, is the Tao Religion. And this Religion is not akin to the Hindu, Islam or the Buddhist and Jain religions. Religion is the Absolute Law of Existence. Religion means the Eternal Law of Life. But all laws are limited. Tao is a Law that has no boundaries.

In fact, all boundaries pertain to death; there are no limitations to Life. Dead things alone are limited. Live things are not limited they are boundless. The very meaning of life is one continuous ability of expansion. If a seed is alive it can turn into a seedling. If a seedling is alive, it can turn into a tree. If a tree is alive. more seeds and seedlings can come out of it. Where the ability to expand stops. Life stops with it. This is why a child is more alive than an old man, for its ability to expand is very great. So Tao is not the Law in any limited sense. It is not a law like any man-made laws, that can be defined, that can be enclosed within a boundary. Tao is a Law that is Infinite Expanse, capable of touching the Infinite, the Boundless. Therefore to call it merely Religion, will not do.

There is one other word that the Rishis have used and which is perhaps, the nearest to Tao. That word is 'RIT' from which the word 'RITU' (season) was evolved. The Ritu they talk about is the discussion of Tao. If we try to understand the word 'Rit', by seasons it will be easier.

Summer comes and then the rains and then Winter follows. Then again it is Summer. It is a recurring circle, that keeps revolving. First there is childhood, then comes youth, then old age and thereafter

death. It is a circle that keeps revolving. First there is morning, then evening and then night, then again it is morning. The Sun rises, then it sets, then it rises again – it is a circle. Life moves in a circular manner. The Controlling Factor of this movement is what is known as 'Rit'. Remember, there is no concept of any God in this word 'Rit'. It means the 'Controlling Principle' and not a Controlling Person. It is not a person who controls, rather, it is a principle that goes on controlling. And this too, is not correct for it gives the impression of a being that controls. It would be more proper to say, 'That from which the Principle occurs, that from which the Principle evolves.' It is not that someone creates the laws and forms regulations – no; the laws are continuously formed through it. As the sprout springs from the bud, so the seasons come out from 'Rit'. This also is one of the intrinsic meanings of Tao.

Yet, none of these words convey the vital meaning of the word Tao, for whatever meaning is given to it, Tao is yet infinitely greater; for something or the other is always left out. This is the greatest difficulty with words that all words are formed out of duality. If we say night, the day is left out; if we say light, darkness is left out; if we say life, death is left out. Whatever we say, something is always left out; and Life, Existence, is one whole amalgam. There night and day are no two separate things, birth and death are not two different events; neither is a child and an old man two different entities, nor are hot and cold two different states. There, when the Sun rises in the morning, it also sets in the night.

Life is such – united, whole but whenever we try to express in words, something is left out. If we say 'day', the night is left out but night too, is within the Existence. Whenever we make a pronouncement – this is Tao, this is the Path, this is the Religion, or the 'Rit', – with the very pronouncement, something is left unpronounced. Now for instance, suppose we say the word 'Regulation', with the very mention of this word, we leave out chaos whereas in life, chaos also is. With the very word 'Regulation', that which is anarchic, the chaotic factor, is left behind. Nietzsche has written somewhere, "How will new stars come into being if disorder is no more? How will new creation come into being if there is anarchy no more?"

Creation is born out of disorder, anarchy. Out of chaos comes creation. In the absence of chaos, there can be no creation. And if creation alone is, it will never end, for it will have to plunge into chaos to end itself. When we say, 'The Principle,' we leave out chaos; but this too, is a part of Existence. There is no way of leaving it out of existence; we can only brush it aside with words. So when we say 'Rit', then also something is left out and that is – chaos; which happens and yet happens outside of the Principle. Everything in Existence does not occur with Principle, or else life would become worthless. There is something in this Existence that happens outside this Law. Whatever is non-significant obeys the Principle but the most profound experiences of life follow no regulations. They come suddenly, uncalled, without any cause, and knock at your door. The day, the advent of God takes place in a person's life, he cannot say that because he did such and such a thing therefore he attained Him. Then, he is only able to say: "What compassion, What mercy, my Lord! I have done nothing to deserve this honour. Whatever I did, had no connection with this, Your coming! How did You come? I never desired You, I never wished for You, nor did I ever seek You. And if I ever desired you, I desired you in a wrong way and if I ever sought You it was in places where You were not and if I ever wished for You I never believed You will ever come my way! Then this – Your Coming! Oh Lord Oh Lord!" When God enters into someone's life, His advent has not the remotest connection with any action on the part of the individual. He comes suddenly, uncalled!

If everything in Existence was based on Principle, then we could say that Tao means 'Rit'. But that

which is outside of this Regulation in Life and which is present every moment and appears suddenly, without a cause, we cannot leave outside of Life and Existence. So then, what shall we call Tao?

In his very first Sutra, Lao Tzu says! "The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao." Now a path means that which can be trodden upon. But Lao Tzu says, "Not the path that can be trodden upon; not the path on which you can walk!" Now if we cannot tread this path, what is the point in calling it a path? If only we can walk on it, could it be a path. But Lao Tzu says otherwise – "That which can be trodden is not the enduring, unchanging Tao!"

There are many things to this small sutra. First and foremost, the path that can be trodden, on which the incidence of walking takes place, the event of reaching does not take place there. Where we have to reach is nowhere away from us. It is here and now. If I have to come to you; I shall have to come along a path but if I have to go to myself, what path shall I follow? And the more I set out on a journey to reach myself the more I shall wander. I shall go further and further away! from myself. He who sets out on a path to find himself, will never reach himself. How will he? He will lose himself with his own hands by this search. He who wants to seek his own Self, has to leave all paths, for no path leads to the Self. In fact, no path is required to reach the self, for paths are required to reach 'the other'. He reaches his own self who leaves all paths and steps aside. He who does not walk, reaches! It is therefore that Lao Tzu says: "The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao."

Lao Tzu says two things: One is, that it is not eternal and enduring. In fact, whatever path we can tread upon, will be formed by ourselves and since it is formed by ourselves, it cannot be enduring. It will be created by man and therefore not created by God. And how can a path that is carved out by us, lead to Truth? If we had the knowledge of the temple of Truth, then we could carve a road that leads up to it. Remember a path can only be made if the destination is known. If I know your house, I'll find a way to reach it. But this is very difficult that I should reach your house without following a specific way. Or else, how will I know where your house is?

An ancient Egyptian Scripture says: "When you meet God and you recognise Him, then you will surely say, 'Forsooth, I have always known You!'" If you cannot say this, then how will you recognise God? Then recognition is impossible. The meaning of recognition is to identify that which is known before. If God stands before me and I get up and ask Him; "What is Your good name?" I shall then never recognise God. And if at the very first glance I recognise Him – that it is He! – it means that at some moment, in some corner of my consciousness, through some opening, I have known Him – to-day, I have recognised Him. We can only recognise what we have known. If you know already where Truth is, where is the need for a path for you? You have reached Truth, you have known it. So the one who knows, makes no paths; one who does not know, makes paths. And how can the paths made by those who do not know ever take you towards Truth?

That cannot be the enduring path.

Which is the enduring path? The Path that was never made by Man; it was when Man was not; and it will be when Man is not. It is that Path which is not created by the Rishis of the Vedas; that is not created by any Buddha, Mahavira, Mohammed, Christ or Krishna. At the most, they can only give news of this Path. So, which is the Enduring Path? In this context the Rishis never say that what they say is their own. They always say, "So it has been said by others before us: so has It always

been known to Man. The tidings we bring is of that Path which is eternal. It was, when we were not and it was even when there was no one. When the Earth disintegrates and Life begins to depart, it still will be. Like the vast expanse of the Skies, it was always present. It is a different matter that our wings were not strong enough till yesterday to fly; today we can. It is yet a different matter that even today we cannot gather courage enough and sit at the edge of our nest, sizing up our wings, turning within our minds whether to fly or not to fly. But the skies are not formed by your flying. When you did not have your wings; when you were imprisoned within the ego: it still was. And even if today, in spite of your wings, you remain sitting and refuse to fly, the skies will not disintegrate on your account. Space is – even without you. So the Enduring Path is that which is devoid of travellers. If a path depends on the traveller, it cannot be enduring.

And the path that is walked upon is ridden with deformities for the traveller walks with his maladies. This needs a little explanation.

He who steps out of all maladies does not walk any more – there is no need to. He has reached. He who is filled with disease, keeps walking. He walks in order to escape his maladies; but whichever path he treads becomes infected with his disease. Wherever he halts, the place becomes unholy. Wherever he seeks, he only succeeds to create more smoke. It is just as when a man steps into a pool of stagnant waters and disturbs the slush below. All his efforts to put down the slush, will only help to raise the remaining slush from below. The more desperately he tries, the more turbid the water becomes, for more slush rises to the surface, making the water more dirty. If Lao Tzu happens to pass by, he would tell him, "Friend, come out! That which you try to purify, becomes impure, for you yourself are impure. Please come out. Leave the water alone. Sit on the shore, the water will purify itself. You leave all efforts for they are dangerous – one and all!"

The Path on which sick people walk, cannot be the enduring path.

Also remember, it is only the sick who walk. Those who reach, those who are purified, who have known, they stop. For then there is no question of walking. In truth, we roam only because some desire goads us on. All desires are unholy. Even the desire of attaining God is unholy. The desire to attain liberation also is not without its stink. Actually wherever there are desires, the mind becomes ugly. A mind full of desire, is a mind filled with tension. Where there is the urge to reach; where there is the eagerness, the expectancy, there is born the madness of wandering. And then all sicknesses gather together.

Lao Tzu says: "THE PATH THAT CAN BE TRODDEN IS NOT THE ENDURING NOR THE UNCHANGING PATH." Is there then, such a path which cannot be trodden? Is there a path on which one does not walk and on which one can only stand? Can there be a path for standing alone? This appears contradictory. Roads are meant for walking and not merely to stand! But Tao is the name of that Path which does not reach you by walking on it; rather it reaches you by halting on it. Because by halting on it people have reached their destination, it is called a Path. Man keeps roaming and running on the roads of the corporeal world and they reach him nowhere. Therefore, these roads, in fact, are roads only in name. They are not the Path.

The second part of the statement is: The name that can be memorised cannot be the enduring and the unchanging Tao. The name which can be named, that can be recollected, that can be expressed in words, cannot be the authentic name. It cannot be the enduring, everlasting name which cannot be conquered by Time. Understand this further:

We give a name to every thing. It is convenient for human transactions, it is easier to establish relationships and describe things. If we do not use names, things become complicated and difficult. All movements are impossible without attributing names in this world. But remember, as soon as we give a name, we reduce the limitlessness of that particular thing and make it a limited entrance. Understand this a little: When we name an object we limit it within a certain boundary. A person is sitting next to you. You have no idea who he is. He is sitting close to you, his arm touching yours but you know nothing about him. As yet, his existence is enormous. Then you ask him and he replies, he is a Musalman. At once his existence will contract. All that is non-Hindu falls away – that much part of Existence falls apart and he is now a limited boundary. Now he is a Musalman. Then you ask: "Are you a Shia or a Sunni?" He says, "I am a Sunni." Yet a part of the Musalman, falls apart.

You continue asking till he reaches the ultimate place where he will now be reverted to a single point. The Vast Existence contracts so that ultimately what remains is the puny, little Ego – imprisoned on all sides. But then you will find it convenient. Then you can draw yourself up and sit away from him or you can take him to your heart. Then you can talk to him as well as anticipate his answers. Now this man is predictable. Now you can foretell whether it would be proper to be with this man or not. Now it has become easy and simple to deal with him. There is no longer any mystery about the existence of this man. Now he has become an object. We name a thing in order to put it to use – so that we can deal with things and make use of them. Thus all our names are purely utilitarian there is no Truth behind them.

Can we also name God, the Ultimate Power? And will the name we give be meaningful?

When we name the most negligible of things, we cause its existence to be deformed. We give a name, the boundary is formed and the existence changes for the lesser. The actual fact is, that we shall never be able to name the Ultimate Power (God). The reason is simply this, that: nowhere do our eyes perceive Him; nowhere do our hands touch Him; nor do the ears ever hear Him – nowhere is a meeting possible with Him. And yet those who have known say, "Our eyes see Him alone, everywhere. Our ears hear His voice alone; whatever we touch, it is He we touch and whomever we meet, it is Him!" But these are people who know. Those who do not, see Him nowhere. Then how will they name Him? And how can those also, who know, who see and hear Him everywhere name Him? For only that can be named which is at one place. One person we call a Musalman for he is found in the Masjid and not in the Mandir (temple). But if this man is encountered again in a temple, then again in a Gurdwara and again in a church; if he is found with a sandal-wood mark on his forehead performing Kirtan one day and found offering prayers in the Masjid the next day, it will be difficult to call him a Musalman. Then it becomes very difficult for you for wherever you go, you find the same man. It is now impossible to name him a Musalman. Those who know not, cannot name Him for they know not whom to name. And those who know, also cannot name Him, for they know all names are His. Everywhere, it is He and He and He!

Therefore Lao Tzu says: "Tao cannot be named." No name can be given that can be memorised. But names are given for remembrance. Names are given so that we can call, we can remember! If there is such a name, that cannot be remembered, it would be wrong to call it a name. What is a name for after all? A father names his son so that he can call out to him, refer to him. The usefulness of a name is in calling out that particular object. But Lao Tzu says: "The name that can be named, is not the Name." But it is for this very remembrance that names are given! Some call Him Ram, some Krishna, some Allah – so that we may remember Him, call out to Him, whom we do not know. But how can we name Him, of whom we know nothing at all?

Whatever name we give Him, will speak for us but will give no news of Him whatsoever. When you say, "We have named him Ram," it shows that you are born in a Hindu family – that is all. You say, "We call him Allah." It only shows you have been brought up in a house where He is referred to as Allah. This gives news of you but no news of Him. And this is why the one who calls Him 'Ram', fights with one who calls Him 'Allah'.

If he who called Him 'Allah', knew whom he was calling and if he who called Him 'Ram', new whom he was calling, there would be no quarrels. But we know nothing. We have only the 'name' and the One, whom we have named, we know nothing about Him at all! The condition laid down by Lao Tzu is a very strange condition: "The name that can be named is not His name." All names can be named (remembered). But is there a name that cannot be named? And if you cannot name, how will you know of it?

Bodhidharma stood before Emperor Wen. The King asked, "Bodhidharma, tell me something about that sacred Supreme Truth." Bodhidharma replied, "What is sacred? There is nothing sacred. Nothing is holy. Which Supreme Truth? There is nothing but Emptiness. There is nothing besides the Void." The King was startled. "Then may I ask," he said, "Who is this who stands before me and speaks?"... And you know what Bodhidharma replied? He said, "I do not know, who stands before you and speaks!" The king thought, he was out of his mind. "You do not know even this much?" He asked. "As long as I knew," replied Bodhidharma, "I knew nothing. Ever since I have known, I cannot even say that I know." For that which is known, that which is recognised and named – is that any name?

Lao Tzu says, "That which can be remembered, is not the name." That which can be named, does not take you beyond Time. Only that can take you beyond Time, which is for ever beyond Time. Only that is beyond Time, which is beyond Time. That which is born within Time, perishes also within Time. If you say that I remembered God at 5 past 5, such a remembrance, will not take you beyond Time. That which is voiced within Time, reverberates and fades also within Time. God is outside of Time. Why?... Because within Time, there is nothing but variation and God is not variation. The exact meaning of Time, is variation. Have you ever realised how you become aware of Time? The fact is, you are only acquainted with variation, you have no knowledge of Time. Take it this way: We are so many people seated in this room. Now if for a full year we keep sitting here and none of us undergoes the slightest change, will we ever feel that a year has passed by? Actually we shall not be conscious even of the passing of a moment, if things remain just as they were. The knowledge of the passing of Time is experienced in the change in things around us. In fact, the sense of alteration is Time. Therefore, the greater the speed with which things change, the more we become conscious of time. You are more conscious of the passing of the day than the passing of night.

If a man lives for sixty years, he sleeps twenty years; but is there an account of these twenty years? None – they pass in sleep. Things are more static in sleep, there are no drastic variations: the traffic on the road does not move so fast – all things are at a standstill and you are alone. If a man is made to remain unconscious for a hundred years, he will have no knowledge of this period of time on awakening. He will be startled to see the change around him! And if he finds things and people just as they were before he became unconscious – the same people around him; the clock ticking away on the wall, the wife cooking in the kitchen, the child away at school – he will never know a hundred years have passed away! The knowledge of time is the knowledge of change, for all objects

are moving, changing and that makes us conscious of Time. The greater the speed of variation, the greater the feeling of time-consciousness.

In the days of old, time-consciousness was not all that apparent. Things were more or less static – almost where they were. The son found things exactly where his father left them. The son then left the things exactly where his father had left them. So things were almost static. It is not so now. Things are not today where they were yesterday and tomorrow, they will not be where they are today! Everything changes fast and hence the intense Time-Consciousness of this Age. Each moment that passes is very priceless. Whatever is formed within the boundary of Time, will change. No happening of the Eternal can take place within the precincts of Time. No ray of Immortality penetrates Time. It is just as: whoever enters the river, is bound to get wet. He who does not want to get wet, will have to stand at the shore. Whoever is within the flow of Time, will have to change. The unchanging, perpetual world starts only when you stand outside of Time.

Lao Tzu says, "The name that can be named, is not the Name." Remembrance is always within Time; it takes time to pronounce words. We cannot pronounce even a single word within the period of one moment. We pronounce the first part, then the second, then the third. Time flows even as I say the word 'Time'. I pronounce 'T' and one part of Time flows by, then 'i' and another part of Time flows by; and so a considerable amount of Time flows by, by the time I finish the word.

Heraklitus has said: "One cannot step twice into the same river." When you step a second time, the same water would have flowed further away. Heraklitus has been very sparing in his statement. The fact is, one cannot step even once in the same river! For when my toes touch the river, the waters are running away. When my toes enter the river, yet more water flows by; when my feet are well within the river, the waters that touch them, are entirely different from the waters that touched my toes! And then as I reach the bottom of the river, the waters are yet different. Not once am I able to touch the same waters. And it would have been alright even then, had the waters of the river alone been changing. The foot that touches the waters, also changes at the same speed! No, it is not possible to step twice into the same river. No, it is not possible to step even once into the same waters; and not only because the waters of the river are changing but because the one who enters the river, also changes. When I had touched the surface of the river, my mind was different; when my foot was half within the waters, my mind became something else; and as I reached the bottom of the river, my mind was again something quite different! Not only was the body changing, the mind was changing too!

Many a time Buddha would tell the person who approached him: "Remember, you are not the same person returning." Now the person may have come just an hour before. He is bound to be startled by Buddha's remark. He would question him: "What is this you say?" And Buddha would reply, "Definitely, I spoke, you heard – and within this period, everything has changed."

The Zen Fakir, Bokozu, was crossing a bridge in one of his travels. His companion remarked; "Do you notice how swiftly the river is running?" And Bokozu replies: "Everybody can see the river flowing. Observe minutely – how fast the bridge is flowing also!" The man is shocked. Do bridges ever flow? It is always the river that flows. He looks inquiringly at Bokozu, who continues his statement, "And this is not all. See yet more carefully – how fast the people standing on the bridge are flowing away!"

All that occurs within Time, changes. Whatever is said here, fades away; whatever is within, is

erased. All writings are the writings on sand – not even sand but water! So the name of God that is taken by the lips by the tongue, by words, in place and time, is not the Eternal Name. It is not the Name that is beyond Time. And this Name, cannot be named. You can know it, you cannot express it. You can live it, you cannot express it. You can live it, you cannot pronounce it. You can be in the Name but you cannot place it on your tongue.

Lao Tzu says at the same time: "It is neither the enduring nor the unchanging Tao." And if God also changes, can we call Him God? And if the Path also changes, can it be called a Path? And if Truth changes, can it be called Truth? What is expected of Truth is, that no matter how much we go astray, how farther away we wander, when we reach, it will still be the same – The Same. Whatever we are, however we are; after wandering for countless births, when we reach the Door, it will still be The Same, that it ever was.

There are two or three points with regard to this sameness that should be taken into account: That alone can be 'the Same,' that is Perfect. That which is not perfect, cannot remain the same; for within this imperfection lies the deep-seated desire to be perfect. And this is what brings about the changes. How can the river stand still at one place? She has to meet the Ocean! She has to run fast, go a long way – there is a lot to be done! How can man remain at one place? God knows how many desires he has to fulfil – how many Oceans to reach? How can the mind remain the same? It has to hurry along; it has a lot to achieve. He alone can be the same, who has nothing left to be achieved; nowhere to go. He who reaches, loses him-self – there beyond which there is nothing to Be. It is the same through Eternity. Remember sameness means perfection. There is no other quality in the consummate Perfection.

There is a very popular joke about Nasruddin. He got hold of a one-stringed instrument. He would keep his finger at one point on the string and play it day in and day out. The wife was disturbed to hear the same note throughout the day. One day passed, then another, then another. It was full eight days that fakir Nasruddin was at the instrument, playing one monotonous note! At last she could hold out no longer, "What is this music you are creating?" She asked him on the eighth day. "Every person in our lane is tormented by this one note you play day and night!" The incessant sound of the single note drove his neighbours mad and they all gathered together and approached him. "Stop for heaven's sake!" They told him. "Many a musician we have seen but never a one like you! You seem to be an amateur. You should move your fingers along the string and create different notes. What is this continuous tun-tun-tun? Our heads will burst! We have decided that either you leave the street or we will.... But tell us why a wise person like you, is indulging in such nerve-wracking madness?" Nasruddin replied, "The other musicians move their hand up and down in search of the proper place. I have found it already! I shall play only this." This is a joke of Nasruddin but this man has played many a profound and priceless joke! If ever God plays an instrument, He too must be playing just one single note. His Hand cannot be moving either this way or that – there can be no flow, no change there.

Lao Tzu says: "It is not the same – that which we can pronounce. That which man can pronounce, is not His Name."

Finally, there is one more thing to be understood in this Sutra.

Words and names, are all the creation of the mind. All creation is of the mind. It is the mind that conceives and forms and Mind is ignorance. The mind knows nothing. But it creates even that which

it does not know. Then we get a feeling of satisfaction that now we know. If I were to tell you that you know nothing about God, you will be terribly disturbed. But if I were to say, "Why, you know everything about God? The mantra 'Ram-Ram' you repeat, that alone is His Name." Then you will feel relieved. If I were to say, "He has no name and remember, the name you have been repeating, has nothing to do with him," then the mind falls into a turmoil, in a vacuum, in an emptiness! It finds no support to stand, to hold on. And the mind will quickly try and find a support. Once this is found, there is no need to seek further. The mind provides substitutes for Truth and makes full arrangements. It says, "This is Truth. It will serve your purpose." Those who stop at the mind, stop on the paths that are made by man. They stagnate at the Shastras that are man-made. They stagnate at those names that have no connection with God whatsoever.

At the very outset of his original utterance Lao Tzu destroys all possibilities. He snatches away all props and supports. He destroys the complete foundation of all that the mind can do. We may well ponder – if this is so, what is now left for Lao Tzu to write? What will he say? How will he say That, which cannot be expressed? How will he indicate the path that cannot be trodden? How will he bind the Changeless and Timeless ONE, he tries to suggest with words?

Lao Tzu's complete method is that of negation.

Therefore, it is necessary to understand a few things in connection with negation so that it is easier to understand Lao Tzu further. There are two ways of suggestion in this world. One is the way of positive suggestion. You ask me, "What is this?" and I reply: "This is a wall, or this is a door"..I take a name. The positive finger points directly – 'this is it!' You ask, "Where is the wall?" I reply, "This is it." But that which can be pointed out directly can be nothing but base or paltry. The Vast Expanse cannot be pointed out with a finger.

The trivial can be pointed at with a finger but if someone asks, "Where is God?" we cannot say, "This is He." We cannot point a finger to God. Rather, all fingers are to be withdrawn into the fist in order to indicate God. When a person closes his fist and says "Here He is," it means the suggestion points nowhere. You cannot point in any direction for He is everywhere.

But the questioner will not be satisfied with this answer. If I close my fist, and say, "Here He is," he might take my fist to indicate Him. Then I shall have to say, "No, no, not my fist." And so negation will start. The man may further try to elucidate his question. He might say, "Perhaps, I have not made my point clear. Is God in the East?" I will have to say, "No", for if I say He is in the East, what happens, to the West? And when we affirm that He is in the East, knowingly or unknowingly we deny His presence in the West.

Directions are the intimations of the limited. What is left behind, is denied. So the second way is that of Negative – Suggestion. When a person tries to explain with this way, he does not say – "It is this, it is that"; rather, he says "It is not this, it is not this – 'Neti-neti'". All his answers are to this effect. A lot of patience is required on the path of Negation, for whatever you ask, he will say, "Not this". Then a time will come when there is nothing more to ask. Then he will say, "This is He!"

It is just as you would begin to question me about things in this room. You catch hold of the table, the chair, the wall and I keep denying. Then when everything in the room is spent, you catch hold of yourself, you catch me and begin to ask: "Is this He?" And I still keep on denying. Then when

there is nothing more to ask and when there is nothing left to deny, then Lao Tzu will say, "This is it!" But then you will be in difficulty. You will say, "You have denied all! Now?" In fact, that which cannot be denied even by denial – that is he. We deny something and it is negated – what authority does it have? What is the value of that which exists with man's acceptance and is extinct by his denial? The Theist says, "He is." He thinks God exists as if his affirmation, strengthens His existence. The Atheist says, "God does not exist." He thinks he has weakened him by his denial, and this is not the view of the Atheist alone. Even the Theist believes that God is weakened and harmed by denial. The Atheist also is ever ready to refute the slightest suggestion of His existence, or else his theory stands in danger – as if this question can be decided by man's acceptance or denial!

There is an ancient story from Tibet: There was a small mosquito. Since the story was written by man, he calls the mosquito small. Actually, it was the biggest among mosquitoes. Nay, he was the king of mosquitoes! Now some mosquitoes lived on the dung-hill, others in trees, yet others in various other places but it became a problem as to where they should house their king. Then the ear of an elephant was agreed upon as a befitting place for his residence. Now all the mosquitoes went up to their king and requested him to go and stay in the elephant's ear as that was, according to them, the worthiest place for their monarch. The king went up to the elephant's ear and proclaimed: "Listen O beast! I, the king of the mosquitoes, have decided to honour you by condescending to make your ear my abode!" Thrice he made this proclamation for it was not considered proper to occupy a place within someone and not even inform him.

The elephant stood silent. The mosquito thought, "Silence is acceptance, and hence the elephant is silent." He stayed many years thus. He would fly in and out; he bred his young ones and his family increased considerably. In spite of this, there was ample place even to entertain guests! Then the mosquitoes decided to find another place for their king. Before leaving, the mosquito stood once again before the elephant's ear and said, "Listen O beast! I, the king of the mosquitoes, had graciously adorned your ear by making it my royal residence. Now I go!" But there was not a sound from the elephant. Should he take this silence as a sign of acceptance, even now? This was rather difficult and degrading. But perhaps the elephant has not heard, for he neither says yes nor does he say no! The mosquito called out louder and louder. At last a faint voice reached the elephant's ears – "I, the king of mosquitoes. stayed within your ear out of great compassion. Can you hear me or not?"

The elephant replied: "Respected Sir, I do not know when you came How long you stayed, I do not know. You come and stay, do whatever you like, I have no knowledge of it!"

The Tibetan Fakir tells this story with a purpose.

Man comes into the world. He creates philosophies. Religious Paths, Truth, Principles and words. He shouts from all the four corners of the vast existence: "Listen ye all – Ram is His name!" or, "Listen ye all – Krishna is His name!" The skies are silent That Infinite Expanse has no knowledge of this. The elephant did finally hear the mosquito, for in spite of the great difference in size there is no qualitative difference between the two – the elephant is a giant mosquito and the mosquito is a diminutive elephant. There is no qualitative difference to make communication impossible. It is possible, though with some difficulty. The mosquito will have to speak very loudly and the elephant will have to hear more intently. But this is not impossible.

But between Existence and the mind of man there is not even this little bit of connection – or is

there? It is not aware of the fact that we are born, though we proclaim it with feast and music to all the world; nor is it conscious of our death! We come and we go; we are like the line drawn over water – no sooner are we formed than we are destroyed. But in this very short period between the line's formation and extinction, God knows how many words we create, how many Shastras and Organisations we create! We spread a whole web of our mind within such a short period.

Lao Tzu cuts this web. 'Not this, not this', is his way of telling. In fact, he who wants to talk in connection with the Absolute will have to say, that nothing can be said in connection with it. And then efforts will have to be made to express; and that effort can only be in the form of negation – 'not this, not this'. The path that can be trodden? No, not that Path. The word that can be named? No, not that word. And don't you fall into the errors of language! According to language – that alone is a name which can be named. We can speak no other name. And the path that can be trodden, that alone is Path – we know of no other. Now if this is placed correctly, you will be surprised at the result! For in straight and simple language, it will convey that: No path is a path; no name is a name. So what you will understand directly, is only this: that which is a way, is not the way at all; that which is a name, is not a name at all!

This is what Lao Tzu is trying to convey. He says, "If you wish to reach, beware of all paths, or you will go astray. If you wish to know him, call out to Him – take no name or you will go amiss." And the slightest error is an infinite blunder in context with this.

A youth came and sat before Marpa. He is with Marpa for the last three years. He tells Marpa: "Show me the way! Give me some idea of His whereabouts – some name, some sign, some symbol!" And every time he asked him about His whereabouts, Marpa would become silent even amidst conversation! Then the youth would plead again, "Why do you always become silent when I ask you? You were speaking right now!" Marpa would then shut his eyes and become all the more silent. If the youth accosts him with the same question while he is walking, he would stop suddenly where he was and become absolutely still.

The disciple reached the end of his patience within three years. "This is the limit!" He would exclaim. "Normally you walk but as soon as I question, you stop there and then! Normally you talk but as soon as I question, you shut your eyes and seal your lips! I have come for this question only to you and not to hear your other sermons or take part in your various travels. I have nothing to do with these!" But again Marpa strikes his typical pose when this question is raised! Then one day the youth asked his permission to leave. "May I go?" He asked, "When did you ever come?" Marpa replied "Since three years, you are wandering outside the gate. When do you ever come in? Whom are you asking for permission to leave? Not for a moment have I felt that you have come within! So many times I stood with the gates wide open. So many times I stopped thinking perhaps you do not come because I am walking. Whenever you asked, I answered." The disciple said: "This is now really the limit! This is my complaint that whenever I asked, you became quiet. Even in the midst of conversation you became silent and now you blame me for this too? This is precisely why I want to leave you, – that you become silent whenever I ask."

Marpa replied: "That was the answer. Would that you too had become silent! Would that you too had stopped when I stopped walking! Then we could have met! One has to be silent if one wants to convey something about him. If you want another to tread his Path, you have to halt." These statements seem contradictory.

Lao Tzu too is like this. At every step he discards each and everything He takes you to that point where there is nothing left to discard – not even you! Only all emptiness remains. And this Emptiness is the Unaltered, the Immutable. Remember, wherever anything comes, alteration comes along with it. There is no holiness besides Emptiness. There is no state more innocent besides Emptiness. A slight trembling of a single thought and the gates of Hell fall wide open. A slight line of thought in the mind and that begins the mundane world. A slight corner of a desire, starts the infinite circles of life and death. Emptiness – complete Emptiness – there is not a single form within or a word or a name; there is no path, no destination; there is nowhere to go, nowhere to reach; nothing to attain! When such a state forms within, then Tao manifests. Then the Way manifests itself; then that Name is heard! Then the enduring and unchanging Law, comes within our understanding. That Law which is not opposed to chaos; which absorbs and holds chaos also within its bosom.

If anyone wishes to ask some question, he may do so – any other question, for all questions are alike.

One friend asks that behind the passing thoughts, it sometimes feels as if there is a short interval of No-Thought. All around thoughts revolve but somewhere at the centre there is this feeling of No-Thought. What is the difference between this condition and the absolute No-Thought condition?

As long as thoughts race within, the thought of No-Thought is also a thought. It is merely a thought that: I am 'Thought-less'. On the one hand there is the movement of thoughts within and on the other, I think I am 'thought-less'. But you can only visualise this state when there are no thoughts within. What is most interesting is the fact that when your mind is in a No-Thought condition, you will not even be aware that there are no thoughts within! To be thought-less is also a thought. It is just like a perfectly healthy man – he is never conscious of the fact that he is healthy. The consciousness of health is an indication of sickness. Therefore we find, that a sick person always talks of health. Such a man is not healthy, he is sick. If sickness persists in some corner, the idea of health lingers within. Many a time this consciousness of health proves to be a new type of illness. If a person becomes too conscious of health, he becomes ill. This is a disease. So it happens that by incessant thinking. by hearing continuously, by regular pondering over it, you develop this expectation of becoming 'Thought-less'. For we have heard that that alone is holy, that alone is the ultimate Bliss, that in itself is the joy of Samadhi, that everything else pales in significance before this supreme bliss. Then this becomes a desire – the desire to become 'Thought-less'. Remember the 'No-Thought' condition cannot be turned into a desire – but it invariably becomes so.

In fact, it is the mind's policy to turn whatever you say into a desire. It says, "Beatitude? There is joy in beatitude. strive for it, seek and you shall attain!" So the search for liberation begins but the liberation the mind seeks, is not the actual liberation. Actually, beatitude is there where the mind is not. That is why, the beatitude sought by the mind is not the authentic beatitude. Now hearing of the No-Thought state continuously, the idea gets fixed in the mind that one should become 'Thought-less'. Remember – "that I should become 'thought-less'" is also a thought. This thought may be the result of hearing Lao Tzu or hearing me or by reading books but what have you of this no-mind state save a thought? There is no thought to take you into No-Thought. There is no need to commit this error. To be 'thought-less' is also a mode of thought.

No – this is one kind of thought and if you persist in pursuing this thought, the mind will deceive you in another way. It will say, "See, at the centre of all these revolving thoughts, there is the No-mind

state; and you are outside these thoughts. But what is this 'I' that stands outside and watches? Is it more than a thought? This standing apart and watching is also a thought which gives a little feeling of peace and joy. But this serenity is not the immortal tranquillity. The serenity that can be named, is no serenity. Unfortunately there is some joy, some peace in this thought which invariably results when any desire of the mind is gratified. This was a desire of the mind – to become 'thought-less'. It gives great satisfaction to the mind to feel that it has performed the feat of becoming 'Thought-less' also. The mind is very clever.

The mind will create a small thought of 'Thoughtless-ness' in one corner and thoughts revolve all around. And it would not be proper to say, there are thoughts all around for there where I say 'I am thoughtless', there too a thought stands. At the most you can say, there is one fixed thought there, whereas the others are flowing – the thoughts of every day activities. If we observe this thought at the centre more deeply, we will find, it too is not completely static, for no thought is completely static. It flickers too, like the flame of a lamp. One moment you will feel you are thought-less, the next moment you will feel, you are not! One moment you will feel a thought creeping within, the next moment again, you will feel you are thoughtless – you are lost!

This will keep on happening for no thought can be outside of alternation, not even the thought that, 'I am thoughtless.' This thought also will keep fluctuating – up and down, now here, now there. For a moment you feel you are thoughtless and soon again you feel, you are 'thoughtless' no more. No, Tao, is not the name of such a state. Rit, (That, which is as It is) is a different thing altogether. There are no thoughts around, not even the thought of No-Thought. No one remains who can assert that he is in the No-Mind state. There is no one within – there is complete silence. There is not even the knower who can say, "See, I am completely quiet." If this much still remains, then know that the mind is yet trying out its last deception; and this deception will throw you back once again into the whirlpool of thoughts. A single moment of this thought of being thoughtless and you are back again into the deepest of hells. This one thought can be likened to the game of snakes and ladders the children play. They keep moving forward, till they enter the snake's mouth and go hurtling down to its tail! A single thought of being thoughtless and you fall in the snake's mouth, you go down, down – all the steps you had so laboriously climbed – all your labour turns to naught!

Therefore, Bodhidharma had once said to the King: "I do not know. I do not know myself, who is standing before you." Someone told him later, that the king was terribly pained by his answer. He felt insulted. He should not have treated a king thus. Bodhidharma said, "Because he was a king, and because he had taken a long journey just to see me, I gave even that much of an answer; or else, even this much of an answer was wrong. That too is not present within me, which can say! I do not know who I am." I had to say this much, or else the king would have been troubled more by my silence. Please do not misunderstand me. It was out of consideration for the trouble he took to come so far and for the fact that he was awaiting my coming since years, I had to give him some answer. It was just as we would give a toy to an eager child, that I gave this answer to him."

As long as thoughts keep whirling within, know that you too, are a thought. Once nothing is left within, not even the knower, then there is no difficulty. This seems very difficult to us; and this was the greatest difficulty in understanding Buddha in this country. The reason why Buddha was understood in China was because of Lao Tzu. Because of Lao Tzu, Buddha was understood in China. Lao Tzu had said all that Buddha said later. Therefore when Buddha's tidings reached China and the people heard his words that the soul does not exist – people understood.

Lao Tzu's teachings were based on the statement: "There is nothing." This was difficult to be digested by Indians. We are ready to concede that thoughts should be extinct – but 'I' should exist! Liberation is very good – but 'I' must be! 'I' must remain. Buddha pronounced in this country: "Even the Soul is not. This also is a thought." Understand this a little.

That, 'I am the soul,' is also a thought. Verily, there is a place where even this thought is not – and That is the Soul! This seems very contrary, that where even the thought that, 'I am the Atman', is absent, that is the very Atman! But this will manifest by itself. You begin to negate things one by one till ultimately you negate yourself. It is like this: A lamp burns, there is a flame. The flame first burns up the oil. The oil finishes then the flame burns up the wick. Then you know what happens? The flame is no more. The flame first burns up the oil, then the wick and then its own self.

Leave the thoughts first; then leave your own self too. When we let-go of our own self, nothing is left behind except a formless condition – a formless Existence. A silent, tranquil power, that is Existence, remains: where no eddy of the ego is formed. The peculiarity of an eddy is, that whatever you throw into it, it quickly grabs and throws into its vortex. The 'I' is a whirlpool. Throw what you will in it and it will start whirling immediately. No eddy remains in the No-Thought, No-Ego state. Then there is the experience of Tao, the experience of Dharma or the experience of that which Buddha refers to as 'Dhamma'. There is the experience of 'the Law'; there is experience of That which the Rishis refer to as 'Rit' (That Which Is) or what Mahavira refers to as 'Kaivalya'. Kaivalya means – Nothing is saved. Only 'the being' remains – where there are no denominations no attributes. Only Existence remains.

Just being – just as we would peep into a deep hole or look at the open skies where there are no stars, no clouds – only the sky. When such a state happens within, where the viewer too, is no more and only the Emptiness remains, then we become aware of the Path which cannot be trodden and which is enduring. Then is known the Truth, that cannot be named, which is immortal. which is forever the same, which alone is Itself.

When Tertullian, the devotee of Jesus, was urged to speak on Jesus, to describe him, to give examples to explain what Jesus was like, he used to reply, "Do not force me to err. Jesus was just as He was. He was just like himself." He could not be compared to another. What will happen in the state of Tao; what will happen by merging in the 'Rit'; what will we be like; what will be our shape and our form; what will be our name and will someone remain or not remain to know? Nothing can be said – there is nothing that can be likened to this state. All words are negative. Only this much can be said: that you will be no more – you will not be there at all! What remains is that, which you have never known before. This much can be said that there will be no thought there, not even the thought that 'I am thoughtless'. And yet, a consciousness remains – such Consciousness, as you have never known before.

The mind is capable of all trickeries and deceptions before this. Therefore it is most necessary to be alert. The mind is so clever and subtly cunning that it can work up all kinds of guiles and deceits. It gives a sex-ridden mind, the illusion of Brahmacharya. It creates the deception of Self-knowledge into one who is completely ignorant of the Self. He who knows nothing. feels himself all-knowing by the trickery of the mind which gives the illusion of having attained that which has not been attained. It is therefore necessary to understand the various forms of deceptivity of the mind.

A youth came to the Zen Fakir Huang Po and said: "I have attained serenity." "Why have you come

here then?" Huang asked. "Go, away, for here I treat only those who are untranquil." The youth found it impossible to leave for he felt Huang Po to be serene in quite a different way. He said, "No. I not go. Allow me to stay here a few days.

Huang Po said, "There is no permission for tranquil people to stay here. Go, ponder – are you really tranquil? I do not feel you could have undertaken this long journey of 200 miles, just to tell me that you have become tranquil; and if you have, the matter is finished. The Lord be praised and may you really become tranquil! But I suggest you go outside and ponder over the question." The youth began to step out of the room but Huang stops him: "Stop! There is no need to go out. Come back. If you have to ponder whether you are serene or not, then you better come in. Your hesitation has given you away. The fact that you ae going to ponder whether you are restless or not, is restlessness enough. Wherever there is choice, there is restlessness. You are definitely restless and I can be of use to you. But only when you understand your mind's clever deception, can I be of any help to you."

You are restless and your mind has tricked you into believing that you are tranquil. You know nothing and you say you know of the Atman within. You know nothing and yet you say, God created the world and that the Soul is immortal. He who falls prey to the deceptions of the mind, will never know that which is worth knowing. That he should not know, is exactly why the mind creates so many deceptions. As long as you are aware of the movement of thoughts within, you should know that the mind has made two divisions within itself: one part motivates the thoughts and the second part creates the thought that – 'I am thoughtless'. This is the duality of the mind alone.

The truth is, there is no duality outside of the mind. Outside of mind, is the undivided whole. There is no experience of the Absolute – not even so much that you can say: "It is like this". At the most what you can say is: "It is not like this; it is not like that".

Enough for to-day, we shall talk again to-morrow.

CHAPTER 2

The mysterious original current – Tao

20 June 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

(CONCEIVED OF AS) HAVING NO NAME, IT IS THE ORIGINATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH; THE NAMED IS THE MOTHER OF ALL THINGS.

Existence has no specific name. It is name-less. Objectification takes place as soon as a name is given.

Every object is a part of the boundless existence as long as it is unnamed. No sooner it is named, it falls apart and separates from existence. Name is the boundary-line of isolation. To name a thing is to separate it from the rest. As long as no name is given, everything is one. No sooner a name is given, things break up and fall apart.

Lao Tzu says, ”Name-less is the Creator of Heaven and Earth. He is the Original Source. The Name or the Named, is the mother of all objects.”

First and foremost, we must understand that things would have been just the same as they are, on the face of this earth even if man did not exist on it. There would have been no difference between the rose and its thorn – there is none in fact. The rose is just as closely connected to the thorn as your heart is to your eyes. There is no distance even between the earth and the sky. It would be difficult to say where the earth ends and where the sky begins. They are so blended, so joined: they are the two extremities of the same thing. It would have been difficult to say where the ocean begins or where the land, – if man did not exist. Land protracts beneath the Ocean and the Ocean beneath the land. That is why we find water when we dig a well. If we go deep within the Ocean, we shall find land. In the Ocean there is more water and less land. In the land there is more earth and less water. Earth cannot be without water and water cannot be without earth.

If we set aside Man, all else in the world is interconnected, and One. There is no difference between them. Things have separated and fallen apart from each other. only on the advent of Man. It is Man who sees them as separate entities. When I look at you, I see your hands. your eyes, your ears. your feet. separately; but within you, in your being, there is no differentiation. There, your eyes, your hands. your ears are all joined – they are the extensions of one and the same thing. The energy that is present in your hand. is not different and apart from the energy which helps the eyes to look. The hand sees through the eyes, and the eyes touch through the hand. Within you in your very being, there is no distance whatsoever between the two. It is only when we view from outside, when we give a name, that the differences start, and things fall apart from each other. We say, 'the eye' and the eye at once separates from the ear. We say, 'the hand,' and the hand falls apart from the legs. As soon as we give a name, we draw a line and things separate, fall apart.

Lao Tzu says: "It is without a name." As long as we attribute no name, it is the Origin of all existence. Lao Tzu has given two names for existence – Heaven and Earth.

Within man's knowledge and experience, there are two very deep-seated sensations – one of happiness, the other of pain. The experience of Existence, if we leave names aside, is either, like the experience of happiness or the experience of sorrow. Happiness and sorrow, in their turn, are also no two different things, if we leave all names aside. Then pleasure is a part of pain and pain a part of pleasure. But we give a name to everything. If I am feeling joy within and if I do not give it a name – that this is joy – then this feeling of joy has its own pain. This is a little difficult to understand. Every feeling of joy has its own pain. Love has its own pain and happiness has its own sorrow. Pleasure contains its own thorns if we do not give it a name. As soon as we name the feeling, we separate joy from its pain. Then we tend to forget the pain in the pleasure believing it not to be a part of pleasure. Similarly the joy experienced in pain is also set aside, forgotten; for we do not take it to be a part of pain. Nowhere in our vocabulary is pleasure contained in pain or vice versa.

It was only today that I was telling someone that in actual experience, it is difficult to differentiate between love and have. There is a distinct difference in words however. What distance can be greater than the distance between love and hate? Those who give discourses on love are bound to say that love is. where hatred is not: and hate is, where love is not. But the living experience shows that love changes into hate and hate into love. In fact. we know of no love, which does not contain its part of hatred. Whomsoever we love, we hate also. But with words, there is difficulty.

In the language of words love is love only; hatred is dropped out. If we look deep within the experience. we shall find that the one we love, we hate also. But this becomes clear in experience alone and not in words – and whomsoever we hate we are able to hate because we love. Else, it is not possible to hate. We have a kind of friendship even with our foes; – there is a kind of attachment. And also with a friend there is a kind of repulsion, a kind of enmity. Words are hard, solid, they cannot contain the opposite. Existence is liquid. It has the quality of containing the opposite within itself.

Death is not contained in our birth but in Existence death is joined to birth; it is contained in birth. There is no place for health in our illness but according to Existence, only a healthy man can fall ill. If you are not healthy, you cannot fall ill. A dead man is never ill. It is necessary that a man be living if he is to fall ill. It is necessary that he should be healthy. It is necessary to be healthy in order to be ill. And if you become aware of the fact that you are ill, it is only because you are healthy; or else

how will you know you are ill? What I mean is, where there is Existence, all opposing differences fall. Then there is the expansion of one alone. The moment we give a name things break into two and a dichotomy is created at once. On the one hand you give a name and on the other the Existence begins to break up into bits and parts. To give a name is the process of breaking up. To give up all names, is the way to know the Absolute, the Whole.

But we cannot remain without giving names. We feel very restless if we do not give a name. We see a thing and we at once give it a name. We hear something – at once we give it a name, We see a flower and the mind at once gives it a name: It is a rose, it is beautiful or otherwise; we have known it before or not known it before; it is familiar or unfamiliar. At once, the flower as such, is left aside and a web of words is created. Then when we view Existence through the mesh of words, it appears broken and distorted.

Lao Tzu says, "Name-less is the creator of Existence the Origin of all Existence; and 'The Name' is the Mother of all objects." Therefore we cannot give a name to Parmatman (God) for as soon as we name Him, He becomes an object. Whatever we name, becomes an object. If we give a name to atman, it becomes an object and if we do not name, even a stone, becomes atman. If we attribute no name, if our mind does not create a name and if without words, without names, we look at even a stone, God will reveal Himself to us in that mere stone. Even if, we give a name to a heart pulsating with love – 'my son, my mother, my wife.' – Then this throbbing heart becomes a dead piece of stone.

Name converts consciousness into object. Leave names, and objects turn into living consciousness. Lao Tzu breaks Existence into two parts in order to explain. He divides it into Heaven and Earth. By Earth he means matter; by Heaven he means, experience, perception, consciousness, understanding. So according to him, the creator of all matter and all consciousness. is Name-less. Heaven is an experience whereas Earth is a state of order, a condition. In the days of Lao Tzu, Earth was Meant to convey the meaning of matter and heaven was used to convey the meaning of consciousness, for the experience of heaven was felt by understanding. Lao Tzu has used these two terms in this context. Matter conveys the meaning of rigidity, immovability; heaven conveys the meaning of consciousness, feeling. The primal source of all matter and all consciousness is Name-less and the process of attributing names, is the mother of all objects.

We live in the world of objects.

We live neither in the world of matter nor in the world of consciousness. We live in a world of objects. If you cast your eyes around and look, you will be able to understand clearly that we live in a world of 'things'. It is not because we live among furniture that we live in things; or that we live in houses and in wealth. These forsooth, are objects but those who stay among these become well-nigh objects themselves.

If I love somebody, I wish that my love should be the same tomorrow as today. I also expect to receive the same love from the beloved the next day. Now we can only place our trust in objects and not in individuals. I will find my chair in the same position tomorrow in which I leave it today. It is predictable and reliable for the chair has no consciousness, no individuality of its own. But the same cannot be predicted about a living individual – that I will get the same amount and quality of love I got today. It could be, it could not be. But I desire it should he. so what I receive today, I must

also get tomorrow. Then I will have to strive to destroy the individual and make an object out of him. Then alone can I rely on him.

Then I will make the lover my husband or the beloved, my wife, as the case may be. I thus obtain the support of the law and society. Then when I demand love tomorrow, the wife (or the husband) cannot deny me, for vows have been made and promises given – everything is confirmed. Now to deny me is no better than a betrayal; failing in one's duty. So the one I tied with my love yesterday, I turn him (or her) into an object. Now if this person shows the slightest sign of consciousness or individuality there is bound to be trouble, there is bound to be friction. Therefore, all our relationships are ties of strife and dissensions. We expect from individuals what we expect from objects;. But in spite of tremendous efforts, no individual can turn into an object. And even though a certain amount of ennui does result, yet a portion of consciousness is forever awake within and this keeps revolting. Then the whole life is spent in curbing the consciousness by striving to load it with matter.

When I suppress a person's individuality and make him into an object or if someone curbs my individuality and turns me into ail object, another tragedy takes place. If a person really turns into an object, then the very meaning of making love to such a person is lost. There is no sense in making love to a chair! The joy of love is only with consciousness. Now this is man's dilemma. He desires to receive fidelity and constancy from an individual, just as he gets from a chair; but he does not desire love from objects for that has no meaning. Such an impossible possibility rages within our minds. We expect from individuals what an inert object alone can give. This is impossible. If the person remains an individual, love is not possible. If the person turns into an inert object, our pleasure in love is lost. Both conditions bring about frustration and nothing but sorrow comes to hand.

Thus we are ever striving to turn each other into passive objects. That which we call family or society, is much less a group of individuals and more a collection of objects. If we search deep within our own condition we will find exactly what Lao Tzu says. In fact, where there is a name. the individual disappears, consciousness is lost and only the object remains. If I even assert to someone that I am your lover I become an object. I give a name to a living, throbbing, happening which was as yet growing, expanding and was as yet new. I gave it a name – now I drew a line of restriction. Now I will stop it from taking its own course, for now I have attributed a name to it. Tomorrow, when I am filled with anger, I will say to myself, "I am a lover, I should not be angry." So I will suppress my anger. Now if anger rises within and it is suppressed, then the love manifested under these conditions will be false and hollow.

The lover who is not capable of being angry becomes incapable of loving also. If I do not consider my beloved so much my own as to be angry with her, I can never consider her so much my own as to love her. But I have confessed my love for her; then what shall I do with the anger that burns within me? I will have to practise deception. Either I should gulp my anger or suppress it or hide it and pretend love. But this love will be false; the anger within is the true condition, within me. So the real feeling will be suppressed within and the false will keep adding, on the surface. Then I shall be a false, an untrue, object and an individual no more. But this suppressed anger will take its revenge. It will push from within day by day. It will try all means to come out. Naturally then, hatred will develop towards the one I have loved. Then I will try all means to escape from the one I have loved!

Lao Tzu says, "Man has erred by giving names." When I confessed my love to someone, did I understand well the meaning and the implications of being a lover? I gave a permanent name to a

momentary feeling. Had I looked well within myself. I would not perhaps have made this statement. Perhaps I would have kept quiet. It was a mistake to speak.

The American President Coolidge used to speak very little. There has never been a politician who spoke so sparingly. A year before he died, a friend asked him the reason why he spoke so little. Coolidge said, "I never suffered for what I did not say and for what ever I did say, I repented all my life. Experience has taught me to speak as little as possible. Had I learnt earlier, I would not have spoken at all!" Perhaps you might think Coolidge may have sworn at somebody and suffered for it. That is the obvious outcome of abusing someone. But when you say to someone, "I love you," then too you have to suffer the consequence thereof!

In fact, give a name and the punishment follows; for we make an object out of a liquid, fluid, individuality. Where there was a flowing current, we tend to raise a wall right in the middle of the stream. Then there is bound to be trouble, there is bound to be pain. Life will want to flow like a current and the planks of name we hammer into it, are bound to cause obstructions. Life, existence, is very vast, all planks of denominations are swept away in its current. But then a trail of the sting of misery, sorrow and remorse is left behind.

Lao Tzu says: "Give no designation." Give a name and an object is born. Let us assume for a moment that all of us here were to forget all language – just for an hour. Will that have any effect on the earth or the skies? Will it make any difference to light and darkness? Will you or your neighbour be then, any different? Would the Hindus and Muslims be distinct from each other? Would there then be a distance between man and woman? If even for an hour we forget all speech, all barriers and distances will fall immediately in such a situation. It would be an uncommon world then – filled with expansion, where there would be no boundaries; and where things will be forever spreading – stopping nowhere. Then you will not feel that someone is sitting next to you, for that, language is necessary. Then you will not feel that someone is a friend or someone is a foe, for these require language.

Then only a vast Existence remains.

And in this Existence, there will be only two kinds of experiences (Remember, Experiences, not names) that Lao Tzu refers to as Heaven and Earth; or it would be better to name them as Matter and Consciousness, according to the world of today. There will be two domains only – that of matter and consciousness and it is the knowledge thereof and not denomination that will remain. All names belong to objects. Objects can be matter as well as individuals. If we attribute a name to a person he becomes an object. If we bestow a name to matter, it also becomes an object. If I say, "This is a chair, it becomes all object. Similarly if I say, "Wife, husband or Son". they too become no more than objects. A son can be possessed just as much as a chair but existence cannot be possessed nor also can Matter be possessed.

The reason is simple: the chair existed when you did not and will still exist long after you are gone. You say: "This is my Son" but tomorrow if he dies, you will take him to the cremation grounds and burn him. And when he is dying, you cannot argue with fate that he is your son and how dare he be taken away without your permission! Nor can you reprimand your son for thus leaving you without your permission.

Existence does not regard any one's possession. Even at the time of birth you only suffer from an illusion that you are born. Existence does not accept ownership of others; nor do objects. It is the attribution of names that starts the ownership; with it are formed objects. Objects are one extremity and ownership is the other. Wherever there is ownership, there must be an object. Then it makes no difference if that object is matter or individual Ownership starts as soon as you say "This is mine." Then that particular thing loses its existence and becomes an object.

We live, surrounded by objects; and the progenitor of all objects, says Lao Tzu, is the process of nomination.

There is a very sweet story about Lao Tzu, that I often refer to: Lao Tzu went out for a walk with a friend one morning. He was an old friend of Lao Tzu and knew very well his love tor silence. This particular morning, he happened to bring a guest along with him. Now this friend began to feel uncontrolable after a while for neither Lao Tzu spoke nor his host. At last he could hold out no longer. He said: "Look, the morning is so beautiful!" Neither Lao Tzu heeded him nor his friend. He became all the more restless. It would have been better if he had not spoken at all! Then they all turned back home. Before they left, Lao Tzu whispered to his friend: "Do not bring your friend again. He is very talkative." The friend was also taken aback by this remark, for after all, the poor man spoke only one small sentence in the course of one and a half hours!

In the evening the friend returned to Lao Tzu and said: "Forgive me for asking but I was upset by your request this morning; My guest made a single remark – that it was a beautiful morning – and you said he talked too much?" Lao Tzu replied: "Give all attribute and things are destroyed. The morning was very very beautiful – as long as your friend did not speak!"

It will be difficult to understand this. Lao Tzu says, "The morning was very beautiful as long as your companion did not speak. Till then the beauty of the morning was vast and endless. There was no end to it. it spread and spread into the vast space hut as soon as your friend commented: "The morning is beautiful." it contracted and became small. Your friend's words drew a boundary-line on the whole vista around. He transgressed and spoilt everything. And when the morning was so beautiful it was an ungraceful gesture to comment on it. To speak amidst such grandeur of beauty is a hindrance, an offence.

"I say, your friend knows nothing of beauty, he only tried to make conversation. He who has knowledge of beauty stops in the middle of a conversation at the very impact of its gorgeousness. When beauty surrounds on all sides. the effect is overbearing; the ears become silent. even the heart seems hardly to pulsate: everything becomes still and motionless. We were silent but your friend broke the stillness for he knew nothing of beauty nor even of the experience of a morning. He was merely looking for an excuse to talk."

This is what we all do. As soon as we meet someone. we begin to talk about the weather – we talk about just anything, for the mere sake of talking. The weather is only an excuse. In truth, it is so difficult to remain silent that we begin to talk on the slightest pretext.

Next time when you begin talking to someone, do a little introspection and you will at once find out, it was a mere excuse just to talk. We have nothing to do with either the morning or the sun or the clouds, all we want is to start a topic, for we have forgotten the art of silence when we are in

company. After a whole life of experiences, Freud has said, "I used to think that we talk in order to express something. Now, I realise, that We talk in order to hide something." There are things that become uncovered if we kept silent, so we hide them by indulging in conversation. If you sit in silence with a companion for just one hour, you will come to know many things about him that you would not otherwise know, even if you talked to him for a full year! What is conversation after all? A man creates a web of ideas and opinions around him just in order to hide his actual self. In the conflux of his words, you will not be able to look into his eyes or notice his gestures. You shall be so engulfed by his words, that there will be only his words all around you and not him.

Have you ever realised that when you think of someone, you remember nothing about him save his words? Do you remember how he looked at you or how he touched you? Do you recollect the expression in his eyes. Or how he entered the room or how he sat? Nothing. All you remember is what he said. In that case, he is no individual but a gramophone. Your remembrance of him is only words, you have no knowledge of his full existence.

What a confounding state of affairs! If you close your eyes and try to visualize your own mother's face. you will be shocked to find that you cannot fully recollect her features! Perhaps you will disagree with me: "How can this be?" you might say. Go home and try out this experiment. Close your eyes and try to bring your mother's picture before your eyes. You will find that as long as you did not concentrate, you could recall her face somewhat but as soon as you begin to concentrate, her picture becomes dim and all lines of her features are lost. You will fail to form a mental image of her – for which son has ever really looked at his mother? And if the mother is ever recollected, it will be through some photograph and not by her presence. Understand this difference: The picture reminds you that you had a mother; her presence, that she was: you played in her lap, she brought you up with her very blood (so to say), she loved you, she pampered you – all this you do not remember. The mere picture on the wall is all that you remember. The picture is an object, whereas the mother is an individual. But the individual is forgotten and the object is remembered. What is the reason behind this? Actually, we fight shy of the living Existent. We try to conceal the living existent not only from others but from our own selves also; and language very skilfully provides means of doing so.

A French Scientist spent twelve years in Siberia, among the Eskimos. Twelve years is a long period and the Eskimos are among the very few tribes of the earth who have not been caught by the madness of language. If an Eskimo speaks about five to ten words in a day, it is enough for him. If he is hungry, he says, "I hungry". It is not the expression of his tongue that conveys the meaning so much as the expression of his eyes, his hands, nay, his whole body conveys the message that he is hungry. The Scientist written in his memoirs that he was in a terrible dilemma. The first six months were a veritable hell for him. He was dying to speak but whom could he talk to? When he could contain himself no longer, he would go out in the wilderness and talk to himself.

You too, speak to yourselves when you are by yourselves. See the people walking on the road – almost everyone, you will find, talking to himself. Sometimes the conversation becomes heated and is accompanied by a lot of actions also! Each man is occupied in talking to himself. You talk to others, you talk to yourself – you are talking within, you are talking without, you are talking without – =you have not a moment to spare to stand aside from words and denominations and glide into Existence.

For six months the Scientist was in great trouble; but soon after, he began to have rare and uncommon experiences. There were wordless gaps in his life now for the first time and then he

realized that the Eskimos lived in a completely different type of a world from his. We have destroyed everything. The world that Lao Tzu talks about, the people he refers to, the possibilities that he speaks of, are the possibilities of word-less experiences. The world of objects forms together with denomination. Drop the words and the object world disappears. Then only Existence remains.

Question 1

QUESTION:
BHAGWAN SRI, WHY HAS THIS SILENT MANIFESTATION OF THE UNKNOWN BEEN GIVEN DIFFERENT BASIC NAMES LIKE, HEAVEN, EARTH, MATTER AND CONSCIOUSNESS? WHY HAS THE MANIFESTATION OF THE ABSOLUTE NOT BEEN GIVEN?

Bhagwan Sri: Manifestation can be of duality only. The absolute remains unmanifested. The utmost that can be said about it, is "Two". That is nearest to Truth. Beyond speech there is only one. Language however, cannot speak of anything without breaking it into two.

Even Lao Tzu, when he speaks, when he writes, commits the least error but he cannot do better than this. And even if we want to deny his expositions, we shall have to use words. Then we may say, "the Absolute, not two." But we shall have to make use of 'two'. In order to express that the Absolute is indivisible, we shall have to say – "It cannot be divided into two". As long as we strive to express, the 'Two' will follow us. If you drop speech, then only will the One, remain. We might well say: "Why can we not say, 'One'?" We are not aware of the fact, that as soon as we mention 'One' the idea of Two forms immediately. It is difficult to find a person, who can say one without creating the idea of two. The idea of 'Two' forms within the mind of the speaker also. In fact, 'One' has no meaning without 'two'. 'One' is only a step to reach 'two' and nothing more.

Lao Tzu makes use of two words; because the most that can be expressed in words is 'Two'. The diverse and the manifold can be reduced only up to two. Beyond this is the inexpressible realm of No-Word. Beyond this, it is not possible to say even as much as Lao Tzu says. It cannot even be said to be inexpressible, the One without a name. That One cannot be expressed.

Whatever we say breaks into two, as soon as we give expression to it. Just as when we throw a stick into water it appears bent. It does not bend but only appears so. Remove it from water and it is straight as before. Now the fact is, it never bent in water but only seemed so. It was always straight. If a man tries his utmost to see the stick straight in water, he cannot. even if he tries a thousand times. His experience will only show him that the stick was never bent, though it appears so in water. It will look inclined at an angle because the radiation changes as soon as it is dropped into water, causing a change in the movement of the rays also. In the same manner, as soon as words are placed in speech, the radiation changes. Then the word that depicts One, will at once bend and convey the idea of Two no sooner it is transformed into language.

Lao Tzu knows that whatever he is saying conveys the idea of duality; but there is no other way. So even when Lao Tzu speaks, he has to speak in duality. It is so difficult that if Lao Tzu remains silent and tries to convey by remaining silent, even then the duality sets in. The attempt at expression brings in the duality. Try to understand this.

This has happened many a time.

Someone went to Shaikh Farid and said: "I have come to hear from you. that which is the Truth and in which there is not a trace of Un-Truth. I want to know only that Truth that the saints have indicated and said it cannot be expressed. Tell me the Truth that is silent – wordless." You know what Farid said? He said, "Certainly I will but first you frame your question in such a way that it contains no words. Ask without words and I shall reply without words. Do not expect me to answer in silence what you ask in speech. Go and frame your question without words and I shall answer accordingly."

The man went away. For years he tried. Whenever Farid passed his village. he made it a point to remind him about the question. "What about your question Brother?" He would ask, "I am trying my best but I cannot form the question without words," the man would say. "Try again." Farid would say. "And when your question is ready, bring it to me. My answer is ready."

The man died. so did Farid. Neither the man went to Farid wit!l his question. nor did anyone hear Farid s answer. When he was on his death-bed others reminded Farid about the answer he said he already had for the man."We are anxious to hear your answer. Please tell us," They pleaded. Farid was silent. "Please tell us," they urged. "You are about to die. Let not the answer die with you." Farid said. "I am answering you. I am silent and that is my answer. If I say even this. that I am answering you with my silence a duality is created. For that would mean that it can be shown with silence and not without it. Duality is created, distinction is formed. Therefore do not make me say that I am answering with my silence. I am silent and you should understand. Raise no words." But how can it be explained by silence only?

Lao Tzu has written this one and only book. This book he wrote at the fag end of his life. He never wrote anything else, though people were always after him. From ordinary men to kings, they all begged him to write down his experiences. Lao Tzu always laughed and waved off their question. "When has anyone ever been able to write this? Do not force me into this foolishness. People have tried before but those who know laugh at their effort, for they have failed. And those who know not, have caught hold of their failures, taking them to be the Truth. Pray, force me not to commit the same error. Those who know, will laugh and say, "See Lao Tzu is doing exactly what he should not. He is trying to tell what cannot be told. What cannot be written, he writes. 'No, No, I will not do that!'"

All throughout his life he eluded them. Then he was getting nearer to the end of his life. Friends and disciples began to press him more and more. Verily, his treasures were untold. Very few possessed such a vast store, very few had known and experienced so deep! Therefore it was natural that those around him should insist that he should write for posterity.

When their insistence began to be stronger and death had yet not come, Lao Tzu found himself in difficulty. Then one night, he quietly left his home and the people who were clamouring for him to write. When in the morning, his disciples found his hut empty, they ran to the king and told him that Lao Tzu had gone away. The King sent his men in search of him. He was stopped at one of the check-posts on the borders of China. Lao Tzu was told that it was the King's order that no one crosses the border without paying the toll. But Lao Tzu argued that he was carrying nothing outside the country. "What tax shall I pay when I have nothing to declare?"

And do you know what the officers replied? "The King has sent word that never before has a man tried to escape with so much treasure. Await here and write all that you have known." This book was thus written by Lao Tzu at a check-post, under the vigilance of the police to clear his taxes before leaving the country.

This TAO-TEH-KING, is a peerless book. Never has a book been written in this fashion. Here was Lao Tzu running away from writing anything. It seems very harsh on the part of the King to have forced him to write when he did not want to; but there is evidence of compassion also. If this book had not been? And there have been others like Lao Tzu who did not write. But what is the use of those that have written and what have we gained from those who have not written? There can be no debate on those that have not written whereas we can discuss and deliberate on the writings of those who have written. We can think and ponder on each word that they have written and try to get at their meaning – And meaning is outside of words.

In the final analysis of the human race it will be difficult to tell whether those who wrote were the wiser or those who did not. Whichever one we choose, it is a choice of duality. One chooses to be silent as he is opposed to writing and one chooses to write as he is opposed to silence. There is, no way to escape duality. Duality creeps in even when Lao Tzu talks and therefore he deliberately says that "Nameless, is the Creator of Heaven and Earth and is the sole Originator of all denominated objects." Duality comes perforce with words. But it is with the hope that the seeker is pushed into the No-word state through the use of words, that people like Lao Tzu make use of words. This is possible. Duality appears to be, it does not actually exist. If it did exist there would have been no presumptions.

Now supposing I move my fingers across the strings of a Veena just once and let it alone. The resonance of the note created by my fingers will fill the room. Then slowly and slowly, it begins to fade. Can you tell when the note has completely died? Can you draw the line where the note ended completely and silence began? Can you clearly define the marking line between the resonance and the non-resonance? You will find that the resonance gradually lost itself into non-resonance – the word slowly merges into silence. If you attune your mind to the single note of the Veena you will find that as the note falls into the void, your mind too, falls into silence to the same extent. Then it will not take you long to find that with the help of the musical note, you too have reached the Non-Resonant state. With the help of words, you have reached the No-Word.

It is with this hope that Lao Tzu, Buddha, Mahavira, Krishna or Christ speak. It is with the hope that perhaps through their words, they may be able to lead you into the No-word state. It is just a contrivance, a device, they make use of. Buddha always said, "Whatever I say, is not to tell you of That which is, rather it is to lead you there." Nothing can be said about that which is, but you can be lead up to it. Perhaps, you too may start on this journey through my words. If your face turns towards that direction, then perhaps some day, you will fall into the bottomless abyss where you will come face to face with the Absolute.

Duality however steps into the language of all who speak.

Buddha talks of Samsara and Nirvana and thus duality steps into his talk. Mahavira talks of matter (Padartha) and the spirit (Paramatman). This also is dualism. It is alright as far as Mahavira goes, for he says that he accepts duality but Shankara, who was a staunch upholder of Monism, also talks of Maya (Illusion) and Brahma (The Universal Spirit), because it is not possible to talk otherwise. Shankara says: "There are no two", yet he has to talk in duality. If there is no 'two', what is Shankara to tell his listeners? What was it that they were to shun if there are no two? What was it that they should liberate themselves from if there are no two? If Brahma alone is, then we all are Brahma. Then where has one to go, where has one to reach, and what has one to do? So even Shankara

has to bring in duality – there is something that has to be extradicated, something that has to be given up – ignorance, illusion, false knowledge. So the two opposites are formed, Shankara is in a dilemma; what is he to do?

Mahavira has been very clear about this: We have to accept duality, for when the two fall off, you will know yourself that there is One alone. So Mahavira says, "We shall not talk about the One. We shall talk of the two and reach where the two drop away." But Shankara insists on talking about the One although he had to talk of the two. And those who talked in dualism had also perforce, to hint at the One.

Buddha often said: "Leave Samsara (the world), attain Nirvana (Liberation)" but in his last words he said: "Samsara and Nirvana, are one and the same." This statement of Buddha alarmed his Bhikshus and sadhakas and are still a cause of uneasiness to them even now after 2,000 years. Samsara is Nirvana, what can be more difficult than this? Then where is one to go? What is one to leave and what has one to attain? So there is a sect of Buddhists, who deny that Buddha ever spoke these words. For, they argue, how can Buddha say that Samsara and Nirvana are one and the same, when all his life he exhorted people to leave Samsara and attain Nirvana? But those who 'knew' say, that verily this is the statement of Buddha. All his other statements can be allowed to go unheeded but this statement he could have only made after he had known. When Buddha reached the peak of the highest experience, then alone he found no distinction between Samsara and Nirvana, between the body and the soul, between Brahma and Maya; and then bondage and freedom became two forms of the same thing. But it is the experience that gives knowledge of the ONE: as soon as it manifests it splits into two. And it is only to manifest that Lao Tzu says – "The earth and Heaven; Matter and Consciousness."

Question 2

QUESTION: BHAGWAN SRI: YOU SAID YESTERDAY THAT WHATEVER CAN BE NAMED, IS NOT THE ETERNAL, THE PERMANENT, TRUTH. ALL NAMES GIVEN TO THE SUPREME TRUTH ARE ONLY MEANT TO SERVE A PURPOSE. BUT MANY HAVE REACHED THE 'NAME-LESS' BY THE SADHANA OF NAM-SUMIRAN (REPETITION OF NAME). PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY YOU SAY THAT WITH THE HELP OF THE CHANGING NAME, ONE CANNOT REACH THE CHANGELESS.

Bhagwan Sri: Lao Tzu prefers the method of the jump. He is not in favour of going step by step. Actually a step is also a jump – a small jump. When you climb the steps you are actually taking small jumps. You have divided the jump into twenty parts; whereas there are others, who jump all the twenty steps at one time. You can also say, this man has made one big step equal to twenty small ones – that is if you do not like to call it a jump. So one man takes one step to cross the same distance whereas another takes twenty steps to do so. We can also say, this man takes twenty jumps. Now this depends on each individual and the amount of courage he has. Now Lao Tzu's method is the Jump. He says: "Why should we catch hold of that which has to be left?" From the changing one has to reach the change-less – and only by leaving the Transient can we reach the Intransient. Therefore leave it and reach! Those who prefer the step-by-step method, believe in gradual progress, just like those who believe in Nam-Smarana (repetition of Name), like Meera and Chaitanya. They also reach where Lao Tzu reaches. They too say, that leave, you have to but leave gradually step by step.

Now for instance, Nanak exhorts his followers to practise Japa (repetition of Name) and at the same

time says, ”He is without a name” – ’THE ALAKH NIRANJAN’ is without a name. The Timeless one is beyond Time but practise Japa, says Nanak. Start with the lips and take His Name, says Nanak – this is the first step. Then close the lips and pronounce the name in the throat – this is the second step. Then leave the throat and repeat the name in your heart – this is the third step. Then leave the heart also and practise the Ajapa-Jap, that is, let the name repeat itself – you do not repeat it. And this happens. First the lips, then the throat, then the heart, and when the name begins to come from the heart, leave the heart! Then the name begins to reverberate through the whole body. from every pore of your being and into the whole Existence! But this is not the destination, it is only a step – then you step into the A-Japa – the Unrepeated. Now there is no Japa, now there is the ’Name-less’. But this has to be reached in four steps.

Now Lao Tzu says, ”That which has to be left, why should it be left so gradually?” He further says ”The very fact you are leaving gradually, shows that you have no mind to leave it. You want to hold on to it, and so keep on postponing.” First you start with the lips, then let-go of the lips and begin with the throat, then let-go the throat and proceed into the heart. When the goal is the ’A-Japa’, Lao Tzu says. ”Let it be here and now.” Why waste time? Let-go – take the Jump. It is not necessary. that everyone finds this method easy. Sometimes, in some cases. it is better to leave gradually. There are types and types of people.

If we tell a person that there is no other way except the Jump, if he is not of the type, he will not take the Jump. On the contrary, he will not even go step by step. He will give up saying ”This is not for me”. But there must be a way for such people to reach the Name-less. So for this type there is the method of proceeding step by step. Lao Tzu’s method is only for those of his type. Remember this always or else it will be difficult for you to understand what I say.

My own nature is such, that when I speak on Lao Tzu, I speak as Lao Tzu, I will completely forget that there was such a person as Chaitanya or Mira or there was a Krishna who expounded the Gita. I shall not bring in the person of the individual, when I talk on them. Therefore, it would be better not to raise other questions when I am speaking on Lao Tzu, for it will only be harmful and there will be no gain. Similarly, do not question me about Lao Tzu when I am speaking on Krishna, for when I speak on Krishna, I become Krishna and speak. Do not bring someone else in between. I have no attachment of my own therefore I can be one with anybody. If I had any particular leanings towards one path, it would not have been possible for me to be completely at one with other paths. For instance, if I was specially attached to Nam-Smaran, – that that is the only way – I would not have been able to explain Lao Tzu to you. Then I could not have done him justice.

I say, what Lao Tzu says is absolutely correct – a 100

It is just as one would try to fix a cart-wheel to a car. It is not that a bullock-cart does not move. It moves alright. Or conversely, if we try to fix a car-wheel to a cart. it will not work. This does not mean that the car wheel does not work; it does. Within its own self, a system works and progresses smoothly but out of the system, it becomes useless.

To Lao Tzu, everything is insignificant and Lao Tzu is correct he is not wrong. In fact, Truth is so vast that it can contain all the opposite truths within itself. Truth is so great, it can accommodate all the reverse and contrary within itself. Untruth is very insignificant, it cannot contain that which is contrary to it. In the mansion of Truth, there are many rooms. Jesus says ”There are many rooms

in the house of the Lord." And each room is big enough to house one Lao Tzu, one Krishna, one Mahavira and thousand others like them. All these rooms belong to the temple of God. But when I show you the door to Lao Tzu's room, do not turn round and say; "This door is red, the door of Krishna you showed yesterday was yellow. You had said we could enter through the yellow door. Now you are talking of a red door!" Now the fun of the whole thing is, that you never tried to enter through the yellow door and now behind the barricade of the yellow door, you will also not enter the red door! Enter from any side. If you can jump, jump! Those whose minds are young and courageous, let them take the jump. Those who are frightened, who have not the courage to jump for fear of breaking their limbs, let them at least proceed step by step! They too will reach though they will take some time. But do not just sit, doing nothing!

He who sits undecided, reaches nowhere. This too, I do not stress, that everyone take the jump. If a person has no mind to jump, it is best that he does not, for it is not incumbent upon him to jump. On the contrary, such a person runs the risk of breaking his limbs. The jump is not necessarily a glorious feat! If you can, you jump; if you cannot, go step by step. But why should he who can jump, go step by step? Remember, the one who can jump may stumble on the steps. The steps will be too small for him and he is bound to fall and break his limbs just as badly as the other. Make up your mind. Understand yourself. I will keep talking of God. Knows how many paths! Whichever door suits you, you enter from there. Do not strive to understand other doors further.

Whatever you can follow and understand well, you may enter there silently. Then when you enter the Temple of God, you will find that those who entered through other doors, have also reached the same place! Once you enter the temple, no one asks which door you came from: left door or right; or did you jump or come step by step? When you stand before the image of the Lord, no one will question whether you came slowly or speedily; whether you climbed one step at a time or two or whether you crossed them all in a single jump. No one asks, nor will you yourself remember how you came.

On reaching the destination the traveller forgets the path. The way is remembered as long as the goal is not reached. Therefore, do not raise this question of paths or else, it will be difficult to understand Lao Tzu. Also, such questions will not make it easier to understand Meera or Chaitanya either. If you are out to know Lao Tzu be absolutely one with him and understand what he says. What he says, is absolutely correct, that some have reached his way. Some people can reach his way. There must be some among you also who can reach this way. Ponder well. Perhaps you are the one! If this path settles within your mind, it can become your path. But our mind always wavers in duality. In the beginning I used to make people sit quietly for meditation. They then came to me and said that nothing happened to them – they just sat. Those very people, now when I advocate sharp meditation, turn round and say, the initial method was a thousand times better! These were the same people who complained that nothing was happening to them by sitting still; it was just a waste of time. Now they maintain, it was so blissful to sit silent! First they said they felt no joy in quiet meditation and now they say just the opposite! These are ways of escapism. First they escaped the first method, now they are finding means to escape this. If this is what you wish, then it is alright but if you are sincerely wishing to understand something then forget everything else. Be merged in the subject completely, drown yourself, then perhaps, the path may turn out to be your path. If there is anything more you wish to ask, you may do so.

Question 3

QUESTION: IF CONSCIOUSNESS CAN BE DETERMINED FULLY, THEN WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IT AND THE ELEMENTS OF MATTER? WHEN NOTHING IS TO BE DONE AND ONLY 'TO BE' IS THE SOLE AIM WHAT WILL NOT BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUCH A STATE AND ABSTRUSE TRANQUILLITY? WHAT IS THE MOTIVE BEHIND THE EXISTENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS FOR OUR EGO. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE EXISTENCE OF A WOODEN CHAIR AND THAT OF THE EXISTENCE OF A NO-THOUGHT MIND?

Bhagwan Sri: You have never had the experience of being a wooden chair nor have you ever had the experience of a No-Mind individual. You know neither of these states and yet you think of the difference between the two. Or perhaps you think there is no difference between the two. How does a wooden chair feel or how does it not feel, you have no idea. What does a person, devoid of thoughts, experience, that also you do not know. But the question arises in the mind alright and the question is very natural. All our questions are like this – that we create questions about things that are beyond our experiences, and therefore no answers thereof are consequential. Only experience gives an effective answer. So let us first experience a little and then see the answer.

When all the thoughts of an individual are silenced, then only consciousness remains – not self-consciousness. This is difficult for us to understand for we know of no other consciousness save self-consciousness. When we say, "I am conscious," it means "I am". Our being conscious has only one meaning for us – "that I know I am". The fact actually is, that I have no idea who I am – none whatsoever. "I am" and that is all. This self-consciousness of ours, is a disease, an illness.

The conflux of this very self-consciousness is ego. We find a thousand means of increasing this self-consciousness. When you put on fine clothes that others have not, what happens? The self-consciousness is strengthened. It is difficult to be self-conscious in ordinary clothes but it is very easy to be so in uncommon clothes. If you are sitting in a vehicle and others are walking, you become self-conscious. You feel you are something. The density of this feeling of self-consciousness, is a disease, it is an illness; and this is our anxiety, this is our tension, this is our cause of restlessness. He whose thoughts have been silenced for good will be conscious but not self-conscious. He will be fully conscious, every pore of his body will be filled with consciousness; consciousness will be flowing all around him but there will be no centre of 'I' within this consciousness. His consciousness will be centre-less – without the 'I'.

This is difficult to understand without the actual experience, for our experience is just one. The centre of 'I', the Ego-Centre keeps throbbing like a wound within. We are conscious of that alone. That is why we feel better when we are unconscious as when a person takes alcohol. Then the self-consciousness is broken and the wound is forgotten for a while. When we sleep soundly at night, we get up fresh, for in deep sleep, the ego-disease is forgotten. When we hear music we forget it; the illness of the ego is abated for a while. But consciousness, we know not of. We have known this concentrated ego only. This ego is the disease of consciousness.

When thoughts are completely absent, when you are in the tranquil, no-thought state, consciousness is complete. Then it is not that 'I' am there or 'you' are there – there is only the being. If we separate the I from the am, and drop the I, then this 'Am-ness', (not the 'I Am-ness') remains. Then there is no suggestion of 'I' in this 'Am-ness'. And he who does not experience this feeling of 'I' cannot experience the feeling of 'you' also. The 'I' falls on one hand and the 'you' on the other. Therefore,

when we are self-conscious, we are individuals and when we are only consciousness, we become the Whole, the Aggregate.

When I am 'I', then I am separate and the whole world is separate; I become an island. When I am just 'Am', I become a continent, the mainland. Then all the stars and moons revolve within my Am-ness; the Sun rises within me, flowers bloom within me and all the friends and enemies of yesterday begin 'to happen' within me. I spread. The ancient way of saying it is – I became Brahma. The meaning of Brahma is – I spread. I spread so as to envelope everything within myself. Nothing remains outside of me.

As long as Self-Consciousness exists, everything is outside of you and you are apart from everything. When only the consciousness remains, then everything, everything is within – there is nothing without; there is no outside. There is nothing that is outside of consciousness – everything is contained within it. There is only 'Inside-ness'. This cannot be comprehended without experience; for it is difficult, nay impossible for us to imagine an inside without an outside. All our experiences show that wherever there is an inside there is bound to be an outside. If the house has an inside, our experience tells us, it must have an outside. We have no knowledge of the whole vast Universe as one house, outside of which there is nothing. When all thoughts are destroyed and only consciousness remains, everything comes within.

Then the question arises – if that is so, then what is the difference between the sentient and the insentient? What is the difference between yourself and a chair? – you ask. This question arises because right now you see a difference between yourself and the chair. In the vast consciousness, this chair also, will be inside of you – a part of you! It will be as sentient as you are. It will be as alive as you are. Even now the chair is alive, but the dimension of its being alive is so different that you cannot be familiar with it. Not a single thing is outside of consciousness. Everything is within consciousness. And there is no such thing where the consciousness is outside of it. Consciousness resides in everything – but in very many ways.

If we try to understand the modes in which consciousness exists it will be easy to follow: If I throw a stone against a wall, it does not go through the wall, it falls on this side of the wall. But if I throw the same stone into the air, it goes through the air. Now the structure of the wall is different and the structure of air is different. But there are things that can pass through the structure of the wall also – like X-ray. With X-ray, the wall does not respond as a wall but as air. The X-rays will not know whether it is crossing a wall or crossing the atmosphere. For the X-ray, the wall is like the air but for the stone it is not.

What I am trying to convey to you is the fact that the quality of our consciousness depends on how we see things. If I am self-centric, the chair is apart and I am apart. If the self breaks then just as the wall and the air is one for the X-ray, so the chair and your-self are one and the same for your consciousness. There is no difference; but this is only when you become aware of it. But if we have no information about it? Just as before X-ray was discovered, no one believed that the intestines could be photographed from outside – and how could they? If a photograph was taken, it could only be of your outside appearance. How could your bones be photographed? The photographer makes use of rays, but these are ordinary rays. Now we know that there are rays that can penetrate the skin and reach the bones. When these rays were discovered, then we became aware of the fact that bones could also be photographed.

Actually Consciousness has its own rules and regulations. The Consciousness that we live in has no extension whatsoever. We remain shrivelled within ourselves. The chair is apart from us, so is the neighbour. Everything is different and apart from us. The nature of our consciousness as it is now is one of aloofness; we are removed and distant from everything and everybody. But no sooner the form of Consciousness changes, there is a qualitative change. As soon as thoughts are destroyed, the distinctions and differentiations fall. All distances fall. All things appear one and each thing looks alive in a different way.

When Aldous Huxley took L.S.D. for the first time, his experiences fortunately, turned out to be similar to your question. There was a chair in front of him. A little while after taking L.S.D., he noticed strange rays emitting from this chair. This chair that seemed ordinary, dead, was alive and scintillating with strange and uncommon colours! He was amazed. Never in his wildest imagination, he could have endowed this chair with such beauty and grandeur! He writes in his book about this experience. He was wonder-struck. That was the first time, he writes, he realised that a chair could be like this. It was not the ordinary chair that stood before him. It seemed as if diamonds flew out of it on all sides – it seemed too precious to sit upon! It was more beautiful that all the stars and the suns put together!

Huxley says he suspected this to be the doings of L.S.D., for it is a Consciousness-expanding drug. Your consciousness expands for a short while under the influence of L.S.D. If in such a short moment of expansion, the chair became alive then Huxley says, "I very well believe now those people who have paid obeisance to a stone as they would to God". The expansion of their consciousness must be of a different dimension from ours. "Now", says Huxley, "I appreciate a painter like Van Gogh, who made the picture of a chair; for why should someone make a picture of a thing like a chair?" Can you imagine a painter of Van Gogh's calibre taking so much pains, devoting so much time and driving himself to madness to draw a mere chair? Is a chair worth taking so much trouble about? Huxley goes on to say: "Till then I could not understand why Van Gogh drew a chair. I know now that he must have seen the chair in a different aspect of consciousness, and drawn it."

Out colours are very pale compared to those that are seen after taking L.S.D. Such colours we have never seen. But L.S.D. does nothing. It merely gives a little expansion to our ordinary consciousness just as if we were to fill a little more air in a balloon and it becomes larger. This slight expansion causes such change in colours. Then the pebbles Lying on the road-side shine like pearls and diamonds.

If today the Western world is mad after L.S.D., this is the only reason. All the world appears very much more beautiful. The whole world gets filled with a sensation, we have never felt before. An ordinary hand appears like the hand of God. Ordinary clothes appear so gorgeous and glamorous that it is beyond our imagination.

L.S.D. has opened a new trend of thought. The new thought is: when the consciousness gets expanded, however little, the world becomes a different place altogether. But when a consciousness like that of Mahavira or Lao Tzu expands completely (and not in small measure) due to the fall and complete extinction of ego, then what difference can there be between you and the chair? It is still very difficult for you to understand, for the chair as you know it, is not the real chair; and the self that you know as yourself, is not the real self. If you try to reckon with two unreal things, you will not understand.

You become the real, original you and the chair will get a chance of becoming genuine; for a false you, is incapable of viewing the actual chair. New doors open into you. Huxley has named his book: 'NEW DOORS OF PERCEPTION: L.S.D.' L.S.D. is a mere chemical alteration which lasts for six, eight or at the most, twelve hours. Then it will fade. And this experience is very infinitesimal. But those who have experienced God; those whose self-consciousness (not consciousness) is completely lost, and who have become conscious, for them all distances fall. To them, each and every particle becomes godly and divine.

If Mahavira walks cautiously, it is not as the Jains understand it – that it is to save an ant or a mosquito (that some people are so worried about). The mosquito that is visible to you is not visible in the same way to Mahavira. If it did, even Mahavira would not have bothered so much about it. In fact, Mahavira experiences Brahma for the first time in the ant (which we never do and hence the concern.) It is so, there is no other way. Existence manifested itself within the ant, to the same extent as within Mahavira himself.

Then the door opens to another world. And when these doors open, you no longer remain in this world. Therefore do not question about this world. This world has no connection, there is no consistency, no relevance, between that world and this. All our questions are somewhat like this: That when I sleep, what is my relationship with my bedroom during my sleep? There is no connection whatsoever. Or is there? You can sleep in this room and be in London in your dreams. You can sleep in a closed room and dream of being under open skies, beneath the stars and the moon! What connection can you have with the room when you are asleep?

No. As soon as you are asleep, you enter a different dimension of consciousness. The room remains in the same dimension as it was but you enter a different world. Then if you want to step out of this room, you have not to open the door of this room. Naturally you will ask whether you should keep the keys of your room with you to go out of the room or put on y our spectacles in order to see the dreams well? No, you enter a different dimension where your spectacles are not required, nor are your eves required for that matter. There will also be no need to open the door of the room – and you will be able to step outside.

If however, you speak to a man who has never dreamt and tell him that there is a particular state when you can be out of the room without opening the door; or that you can reach London without boarding a ship or a plane or any other vehicle; or that you need no key, you do not need even to open the door to be out of the room, he will question the soundness of your mind. According to him, if you do not open the door, you will knock your head against it; or how will the lock open without a key? His questions are all appropriate, yet you will laugh. You will say, he knows nothing of dreams where none of these questions are appropriate.

No sooner the mind falls and the No-Mind Consciousness is created, you step into a different world altogether, where nothing from this world is relevant. Not a single thing, not a single law of this world is applicable to it. Whatever appears insentient in this world will be sentient there. What appears dead here is alive there. Where there are doors in this world, there will be walls there and where there are walls here, there will be doors there. No question of this world holds sense there. Therefore whatever questions we raise here have no meaning vis-a-vis that world.

Only those questions are meaningful that are made to ask how we can enter this realm. But if you

think that sitting here in this world we can understand about that world by asking questions, you are mistaken. That is not possible.

So much for today. Any questions?

Question 4

QUESTION: BHAGWAN SRI, FIRST YOU EXPLAINED THAT WHEN YOU MEET GOD, THE SECRET IS UNFOLDED AND YOU KNOW YOU HAVE SEEN HIM BEFORE. ANOTHER THING YOU SAID, THAT NOTHING EXISTS; WHAT IS, IS HIM ALONE. TO DAY ALSO YOU POINTED OUT THAT MATTER AND CONSCIOUSNESS ARE ONE AND THE SAME. THIS THAT IS ALL THE SAME, THIS GOD THAT IS THE SAME, IS IT THIS VERY STATE OR SOMETHING BEYOND?

Bhagwan Sri: It is both. The ever-abiding state of being, is verily God. But this abiding state is forever spreading beyond and beyond. It ends nowhere. For instance, suppose I jump into the ocean I can say, that I descended into the ocean but I cannot say I descended into the whole Ocean. At the most I can say that I touched a part of the ocean from one shore. The ocean is beyond, much beyond. Where I stand, hardly a wave or two of the Ocean touch me. The Ocean is infinite. So when someone experiences God, he does so in the same way. Then he knows that whatever is, is God. At the same time he knows that what he knows of God is not enough – He is beyond and yet beyond. And no matter how much a person knows, this beyondness never ends; it is forever there. This is the mystery. No matter how far one travels, he yet has no idea of the other shore. We only know of the shore from where we started. The other shore is forever unknown.

Another very interesting thing happens, which will be difficult for you to understand. When the person returns, he finds that the shore he left behind is also not there. That shore is there for you as long as you stand on it. When you jump in, you not only do not find the other shore but on return the initial shore is also not there! Whatever now is, is God. What is, however, keeps spreading beyond and beyond and yet beyond. No matter how far we go, it is spread yet farther and farther away.

No one has ever reached the place from where he has been able to say: ”Here at last, is the end.” No one will ever reach such a place. It is logically impossible for supposing a person does reach the end and proclaim it to be the end, the question arises – ”What next?” There must be something after that. The boundary always requires the other. If there is no other house next to yours there is no point in putting up a fence, for it is because of the neighbour that the fence is needed. And Parmatman is alone. In other words that which is Existence, we call Paramatman. So we cannot reach him to such a place where we can say – This is all, for this can only be if another starts from there. Any beginning is the end of something else and any end is the beginning of something else. If something else begins, then only can we reach the end of God but nothing does.

The scientists are also in a dilemma. They are also eager that the Universe should finish somewhere after all! God is not their question as yet but the universe should end somewhere. Where will it end? And if it does, what next? This question arises immediately. What will happen at the boundary-line of the Universe? Another Universe will start – so say the scientists. But this does not solve the problem; for them we think of all the Universes collectively and inquire where they will end. They cannot end. Truth, Existence, is infinite in this context.

Therefore, Paramatman (The Universal Spirit) is what He is. There is also that which is spread beyond and beyond, and is accepted within by the Absolute. These are not two things. Therefore we can never say, ”This alone is God”. All we can say is: ”This too, is God: and there is more and yet more.” What we do know that too, is God; what we do not know, that too is God. What others have known, that too is God. What others have not known, that also is God. And also that which perhaps no one will ever know – That too, is God. Not only is He Unknown but also Unknowable. Unknown is that, which can be made knowable at sometime, God is at the same time, Unknowable. That which forever remains behind, will also have to be incorporated. So we shall have to say, ”This is God but That which is beyond this, is also God. And that which forever remains beyond, that too, is God.”

CHAPTER 3

Into the disinterested depths of Tao

21 June 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 1: SUTRA 3

THEREFORE:

ALWAYS STRIPPED OF PASSION WE MUST BE FOUND

IF LIFE'S SECRET WE WOULD SOUND;

BUT IF PASSION ALWAYS WITHIN US BE,

ITS OUTER FRINGE IS ALL THAT WE SHALL SEE.

The path that can be trodden upon, is not the Path. The Truth that can be investigated, is not the Truth.

The Creator of Existence is without any name and the Name is the mother of all substance.

After the first two sutras (quoted above) the third sutra of Lao Tzu starts with Therefore. This therefore is first to be understood before we proceed to the sutra. It looks strange – the first two sutras bear no relationship with the third sutra, which could justify the use of therefore. Truth cannot be expressed in words. The Path that is, cannot be trodden upon. Nameless is Existence; the world of substance is the world of denomination. Therefore – the mind steeped with desires, can never know the bottomless depths where lies the secret of existence. It can only know the fringe of existence.

The word therefore can only be used if that which follows, is a natural outcome of the preceding statements. If the third statement is a corollary of the first two statements, then alone can 'therefore' be used. But what is the connection between a mind filled with passion and a mind filled with words? What can be the connection of a Path that cannot be trodden, which cannot be given a name, to a mind filled with passion? This is not apparently clear; it is inevident. Therefore, it will be very difficult to understand this word therefore, as used by Lao Tzu.

Let us first examine the connection. Actually, he who is filled with desires, wishes to reach somewhere. The very desire to reach is passion. If I am happy to be myself and accept myself as I am, all paths become useless for me. Then there is no path for me. If I have not to go anywhere, if I have not to reach anywhere then there is no need no purpose, for a path for me. If I have to reach somewhere go somewhere; if I have to be something attain something then paths become inevitable. If I have not to travel anywhere, what meaning can paths have for me? But if we want to take a journey. then paths become meaningful. Whatever paths we create are all paths of desires, of passions. No path is ever created without a desire, although, the desire is not concerned with the passage at all. Passion is concerned with the destination only. But no destination can be reached without a route. So no desire can be fulfilled without following a path. Some means are always necessary to fulfill a desire.

Passion is the aspiration to reach somewhere. Some distant star keeps shining on the horizon of a passion – ridden mind and beckons to it: "Come hither, there is happiness, there is joy, there is peace, where I am. Where you stand, there is no joy, no peace." Now there is a great distance between us and the skies, and we have perforce, to find a way to connect the two. Then it makes no difference whether we pave the path with wealth or with religion, whether we travel inwards or outwards. It makes no difference whether we aspire for worldly gains or seek the doors of beatitude and God through that path. If our desti-nation is outside and away from us, we have to make a path to join us to our goal. Then the path becomes inevitable.

And Lao Tzu says: "The path that can be trodden upon, is not the Path." But a mind filled with desires, is bound to tread on paths. So it means, that whatever path a desire-ridden mind follows, is not the real Path. It is only the wrong paths that can be trodden. We have not to walk on the actual Path. Really speaking, the ambition to reach anywhere is an erroneous aspiration – anywhere unconditionally. It is not that the ambition of amassing wealth alone is a wrong ambition or the ambition of winning the whole world is a wrong ambition – No; even the ambition of attaining beatitude, is equally wrong. Actually as soon as the question of attainment comes in, the mind is filled with tension and becomes restless.

A mind filled with passion is never where it is but keeps forever wandering where it is not. This is a very impossible situation. I am not where I am but am always wandering where I am not. Then it is but natural that I am filled with anguish. I am tense, for I can only be at ease where I actually am; where I am not, I cannot relax. It is necessary however, that in order to be where I am, my mind should not desire to be elsewhere – it should not be taking flights to distant lands!

Hence Lao Tzu says: "Therefore a mind filled with passion, a mind filled with desires, cannot open the doors to the deep mysteries of existence." It can only be acquainted with the outer fringe; the inner mysteries remain unknown. The palace of existence remains unknown and the desiring mind lives out its life taking the outer walls to be authentic. It is bound to do so.

For the palace is here and now; and the desirous mind is always somewhere else. It is never here and now. It is lost in dreams. It is not that if the mind satisfies a particular desire there will be any sizable change in the situation. If I am here today, I think of being somewhere else; then when I reach that place, the mind will sow fresh seeds of desire for some other place. So we keep running. This is a very interesting race where one destination starts off a new race for another destination – and there is no end!

Actually, that which we thought to be the destination, we discover to be a temporary encampment. Before reaching, it seems that everything will be attained by reaching the goal and on reaching we find it was only the beginning – there is much farther to go. Therefore we are never at peace, even for a moment. Lao Tzu has purposely used the word 'therefore' to imply a calculated inference. And the conclusion arrived at is that: "ALWAYS STRIPPED OF PASSION WE MUST BE FOUND," with all passions, uprooted, uncovered. We should strip ourselves of desires as one would peel an onion, layer by layer till nothing remains in the end.

Do you think you will remain, if you remove all your desires? Are you anything more than a collection of desires? If all your layers are removed like the layers of an onion, what will you be but a zero? You are what you have desired to be – a collection of your desires. Think what will remain if all your desires fall off – A mere emptiness – Nothing! But it is this 'No-thing' from which the door to Existence opens.

In fact, all doors open through the void.

You build a house. You make a door in it. Have you ever thought what a door is? The door is merely an emptiness. Where you have not built the wall, the door is. The actual interpretation of a door would be – where there is nothing. You cannot enter through the wall. You can enter only through the door. What is the meaning of the door? The door means where there is the void; where there is nothing, you enter from there. Where there is something, you cannot enter. Now this is an interesting thing: You cannot enter a house through the house. Entrance is only possible from where there is nothing: mere emptiness. The door means, where the house is not. Whatever is besides the door, is the house.

Till such time that we discover just such emptiness within ourselves, till then, we cannot enter the acme of the mystery of existence. The castle of existence will remain unknown and unfamiliar to us.

"Rip off the layers of desires," says Lao Tzu. Not a single layer should remain. We do sometimes, peel off the layers of desire, but only when we have formed other and bigger ones than before. We leave one desire only when it is replaced by another, when it is fully complemented. Actually. we leave a desire only, when we come across a bigger and better desire. We break small houses in order to build bigger ones. We leave smaller assignments for bigger ones. We too let go of desires but only when a bigger rampart is in sight, do we let go of smaller walls.

Sometimes it also happens that we leave the entire frame of human desires. A man who sought wealth, position, fame, leaves everything. He climbs down from his high office, renounces wealth, he renounces his clothes and becomes naked and he says, "I now set out in search of God." He renounces all worldly things but then his eyes are set towards a very vast attainment. He destroys all worldly attainments. Now no one can say that he is after wealth or position or fame.

But if we ponder on the word 'ISHWARA', we shall know the secret. The word Ishwara is derived from 'AISHWARYA', which means glory, grandeur, majesty and super-human power. The ultimate 'Aishwarya' is 'Ishwara'. Now he is after that grandeur and majesty that are endless. Now he seeks wealth that cannot be stolen. He is after that acquirement that death cannot take away from him. But still it is a search all the same. Now he is out to seek a position from which he has not to climb down; he is after that fame that never dies. The search continues all the same, it is only that he has given a new name to his seeking – Ishwara (God). Keep this in mind: no one can make God an object of his desires. If he does, he will not find God. He will only establish his new desires in new forms. Liberation cannot be an object of desire. If it is, he will find it is just a new kind of prison he has created – beautiful, inlaid with gold, filled with flowers but a prison all the same. Actually desires cannot lead us outside of prison. Wherever there is desire, there is bondage.

Lao Tzu says: "Remove, tear off each layer of your passionate desires." Why? for it you want to measure the bottomless depths where lie the mysteries of existence, you shall have to be desire-less. To be desireless means – devoid of all desires. The desire for tranquility, the desire for meditation and Sadhana remain even when other desires are gone. The mind is very clever. It says: "It is perfectly alright; you do not want wealth, hut meditation you want. You do not want position but you do want peace!" The mind lives not in wealth or position, the mind lives in desiring. Therefore, any topic is good enough for the mind. Let there be an aim – of what sort does not matter to the mind. Desireless-ness means desiring nothing. Beware, the mind's deceptions are very subtle! So much so that it can make you desire to be desireless also! It will goad you to desire to be desire-less. This way by standing behind your desireless-ness, it can exist.

Somewhere in Gitanjali, Ravindranath has sung to the Lord:

I desire nothing from you. My only wish is, that no desire remains in my mind." This makes no difference to the desire – none whatsoever. If you were to examine deeply, you will find that the person who wishes for ten thousand rupees or a big house, his desire is nothing compared to the desire of Ravindranath. What is the worth of his desire when compared to Ravindranath's? Ravindranath says: "I want nothing save desirelessness." This is the ultimate desire, last and very subtle. And Lao Tzu says "Be desireless. Rip off all desires – rip them off to the last breath of your life."

A Sadhaka once approached Lao Tzu and said: "I want peace." "You will never get it," Lao Tzu replied. The youth was startled, "What have I done, what is there in me such that I cannot attain peace?" Lao Tzu then explained: "As long as you wish for peace, you will not get it. I too desired for a long time and ultimately discovered that the desire for tranquility becomes so great a dissatisfaction. that no restlessness is greater than this. There-fore, give up the idea of desiring peace."

I remember another incident: A Sadhaka went up to Lechee and said: "I have left everything." Lechee replied: "Be kind enough to leave this also. Then you may come." The youth said: "I have left everything." Lechee says: "There is no need to hold on to this much also." The feeling of desirelessness is so very subtle. The youth again insists: "But I have left everything." Lechee says: "Leave this much also. Why have you kept this much back?" The youth replies, "I have kept nothing back. There is nothing left with me." Lechee says: "Do not hold on to this also." Desire, wishes and longings capture us from many directions. To be desireless means: "I accept myself as I am." If I am restless, I am restless. If I am uneasy I am uneasy. If I am in captivity, I accept that I

am in captivity. If I am in misery, I am in misery. The total acceptability of myself as I am. There is no question of my being an inch otherwise. I am what I am. Then there is no motivation. Then how can any journey start? Then how can the mind goad you to go here, attain there? Then what I am, I am.

The quintessence of Tao is 'Tathata,' acceptability. Where there is total acceptability, there is the condition of desirelessness. The slightest unacceptability, gives rise to desire. Then longing and passion follow in its wake. Then the race begins. Mind you, longing is born out of unacceptability. We all, live in our longings. If you probe into each desire of yours you will soon come to know, which non-acceptability has given birth to which desire. Which thing you wished was not as it is, which ought to have otherwise, which ought to have been different and what desire accrued therefrom?

A funeral procession was passing by Nasruddin s house. Someone has died and all the reputed gentry of the village were in the procession. As they passed Mulla Nasruddin's house, they all raised their hands in salute to him, for he was widely respected in his village.

The Mulla's wife who was standing at the door, saw this. She ran in and told the Mulla that someone of consequence had died and the gentry in the funeral procession were saluting as they passed the Mulla's house! "It is possible," says Nasruddin. "I heard the noise but I had turned the other side. And you know the dead man s wrong habits! He could have died an hour later, when I would have turned the other side!" That was a joke of Nasruddin on mankind. He says, "I was facing the other way. There was no question of turning sides to accept their greetings!"

At one time, the people of his village thought, that Nasruddin was in a bad way. They gathered some money and went to present it to him. He was lying straight on his back, under the open skies, beneath a tree. One of them came forward and offering the bag of money said: "Nasruddin, we heard you were in difficulty. We have brought some money for you. Please accept it." Nasruddin tells him: "Please come after some time. The fact is, my pocket is under my back. When I turn upside down you may come and put the money in it."

Nasruddin's jokes are very subtle hints of man's failings. He was a priceless man.

If we go deep into the nature of desirelessness, we shall know that everything is acceptable (in that condition) as it is and how it is. There is not the slightest desire for it to be otherwise. "In the absence of such a desire," Lao Tzu says, "the mysteries of existence and its bottomless depths can be touched." And it is in the depths that Existence actually is. On the surface is the mere fringe of existence, the outer lines. If supposing I touch you, I will go back and say I touched you and invariably this is what we say. The fact is I have only touched your outer form and not you. The outer form of your body is not vou. It is only a boundary-line between you and the world. You are deep within the deepest within. All else is an outside arrangement within which you can be. It is only your house, your mantle.

If we know others by their outward appearance, it is pardonable. We see our own selves also only from the outside. We feel and touch our own selves also from the outside.

We can feel the whole existence only from the outside and Lao Tzu says, "It is because of the passion-ridden mind." It is important to understand this well. Why can not a mind filled with passion,

go deep? There are three reasons: One is, – A mind filled with passion cannot stay in one place for more than a moment, therefore it cannot dig within. A passion-ridden mind, is a fleeing mind, it cannot stop a moment anywhere. And to descend within one self, you have to dig within. Now you cannot dig a well by running with a pick-axe in your hand! At the most you will remove a few stones here and there and spoil the road by making pot-holes all over but you will never dig a well. To dig a well you have to dig in one place with all your strength and with all your patience and this, a mind that is always running cannot do. This mind is always a step ahead of you. As the shadow walks behind you, the mind flits before you. It works up visions of distant lands as yet ahead of you. So a passion – ridden mind does not stop anywhere and without stopping, no depths can be reached.

Secondly, a passion-ridden mind is never in 'the Present' – never. And life is always in 'the Present'. A mind steeped in desires remains always in the future. If Existence is to be felt, it must be felt in this very moment, but the desiring mind says "Everything is hidden in the moments ahead. Where I shall reach tomorrow, there is nothing but bliss and untold treasures! Today? – There is nothing in the present day!" The passionate mind is always dejected about the present and eager about the future. The secret of Life lies in the Present. In fact in Existence, there is only the Present – there is neither past nor future. Existence is always Present. Existence always is.

Past and future are the simulations of a desiring mind. The mind stores the past carefully, for the journey into the future, depends entirely on the past. Therefore, what we call the future is a repetition of our past only. It is a reflection, a projection of the past only. Whatever has been attained in the past, we try to attain again and again in the future, with a slight modification. So we safeguard our past in order to create our future. But the past is a mere recollection, not existence and the future is a mere conception and not existence. The future is a dream that is still to happen and the past is a dream that has already happened. But That, which forever is, is neither the past nor the future; it is the present.

It would not, however, be correct to call it strictly the Present, for that we refer to as present, which is between the past and the future. Now if the past is false and the future is false, there cannot be a reality in-between the two. There is no means for the existence of Reality between two falsities. Therefore, it would be better to say that there is no present also – Only Existence, Eternity, Immortality, Is, where nothing is destroyed and nothing made and where everything Is. It is a full state of Beingness, and he who enters into this 'Being-ness' this 'is-ness' he alone can touch the fathomless depths of Existence.

The desiring mind will keep running along the circumference. It will take delight in the past and project dreams for the future. It will have its roots in the past and spread its branches in the future in the hope for the flowers that will never come. And Existence? Existence that is Now is flowing away every minute. It is now, here, this very moment!

Now the third reason:

Life is the closest proximity. Perhaps this too is not strictly correct, for we ourselves are existence. Therefore if it were in the closest proximity, it would still be at a distance from us. We are Existence itself. A desiring mind is a search for the far-away; whereas Existence is closer than the closest proximity. A desiring mind is farther away than the farthest and these two never meet. Kipling says in one of his poems: "Oh East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet." Perhaps it

is possible for East and West to meet but mind and Existence can never meet. Therefore, he who is filled with the mind is devoid of Existence and he whose mind is empty, is filled with Existence.

Now we are filled with the mind, so it is a difficult question for us, whether we have any knowledge of existence or not. No, we have no knowledge of existence whatsoever. We have taken our mind for our existence and this is as good as someone taking pebbles to be diamonds. It is just as if someone would take the fallen dry leaves of a tree to be flowers and never raise his eyes to see the actual ones above; and he would gather these dry leaves that are useless and treasure them! The mind is the collection of ashes of the past. As a traveller's clothes get filled with dust, so also the dust that collects as we pass through existence, forms the mind. And it is with this collection of piles of dust, that we think about the future.

Lao Tzu wants to cut out the very roots of the mind. Therefore Lao Tzu says: "Freedom from desires," for where desires are not, the mind cannot exist. Desire is the root. If you ask Buddha, he will say: "Avarice". Where ambition is not where avarice is not, there everything is. It is an apt word – Avarice and Lao Tzu refers to it as desiring, passion. Mahavira calls it 'Distraction, error'. Different words have been used by different people but the roots that have to be destroyed, are the same.

He who desires – anything – cannot step out of the mind. He who desires nothing stands outside of the mind – this very moment! He has not to wait for another day. This very moment, if you summon enough courage to desire nothing this very moment you will stand outside the blind state of countless lives you have lived. This very moment! But beware of beguilement! Deception is not possible for the only reason that it is almost impossible to step out of the mind. Beguilement is possible because you do not know and understand the secrets of the mind. You will bear me and say to yourself "If it is possible, why not step out this very moment? I must step out this minute." Then you create the desire of step out of the mind, in order to be tranquil, to attain bliss, to attain the secrets of Existence. If you give this also a form of desire, you will go astray again.

There was a Sufi fakir by the name of Byajid. When he first went to his guru, he was in the habit of sleeping a great deal. When the guru taught, he would be fast asleep. If he was sent to guard the gate. Byajid would fall asleep there also. The guru explained to him: "Look Byajid, you will lose everything by sleeping." Byajid replied, "It is not that I am asleep all the time. I sleep sometime and I am awake sometime." But the guru said: "You do not know. Many a time it happens, that a person keeps awake all the time and then if his eyes close just for a moment, everything is lost."

Then one night Byajid dreams that he is dead and is standing at the gates of paradise. The door is closed and it bears small placard which says: "He who wishes to enter, may wait here. The door opens once every thousand years and for one moment only. Be alert and wait." Byajid was perturbed. The door opened just for a moment, once in a thousand years – and sleep was bound to overpower him! He gathered himself together and with great effort he managed to keep his eyes open. But in spite of this, he dozed off. When he awoke he saw the gates just closing. He ran but the door had closed already! He waited another thousand years. Then one day as he dozed, he heard that the door had opened. But the mind said: "You are dreaming. The gates do not open just like that! The thousand years are yet not over." Byajid however got out of his sleep, frightened and confused. He saw the gates were closed. Then he awoke and found it was all a dream.

Byajid ran straight to his guru. though it was mid-night. He fell at his feet and said: "Now I shall not even blink!" "What happened?" Asked the guru. He told him about his dream. The guru said, "Did

you not read the notice on the other side of the door?" "No" said Byajid "Both the times the doors were almost closed when I awoke."

His guru said, "When the dream comes again make it a point to read what is written on the other side. It says, "This door open only when you are asleep." The door opens when we are unconscious. What could such a term of condition mean? The truth is, (which Byajid's guru did not tell him), as we go deep within, we find that when the doors open, we become unconscious, and this is due to the mind. So it is not that the doors open when we are unconscious; rather, when the doors open, we become unconscious. The reason for this is, that once we see the doors open, there is no way to keep the mind alive. So the mind invents a thousand ways to save itself.

It was only the day before yesterday that a youth came to me. He had come to me before. Then he was tormented by the restlessness of the mind, its uneasiness, its confusion. This time his anxiety was different. He said, "My mind is becoming peaceful with meditation. It is now less uneasy but a new fear has caught hold of me. Now I am not sure whether I should go further in. I may lose all interest in the pleasures of life, I may lose all sense of competition and ambition. Then how will I progress in life?" What he says is correct. The mind brings up such questions. The mind invents a thousand deceptions whenever the door opens.

I have tried to go closer to so many people. Whenever their meditation deepens, the mind at once devises excuses and quickly comes out of meditation. It brings within you the fear of upsetting your normal arrangements and warns you against medita-tion.

One person has written to me that he is going deeper into meditation but is afraid of going deeper still for he fears he might die! He wants me to take the responsibility in such a case. I asked him whether death was not going to come to him without meditation. I told him that if he is certain that death will not come to him if he does not meditate, then I take the responsibility. But since death is bound to come even without meditation, whey does he throw the responsibility on me? Some others write and express their fears – "Is it possible that we might lose our sanity in meditation?"

The mind quickly invents excuses. As soon as you reach the door, the mind warns: "This much and no more. Go back!" I used to explain to people that merely changing one's clothes and changing one's name or taking sannyas brings no change in a person. Then they would come and beg for some external support to help them to go within – "If you do not give us some aid – a mala, an image, clothes, a temple or some exercise like fasting. how can we go in? Give us something to go by."

So I agreed to give outside support. Now these very people come and say: "What can happen by changing clothes? What change will the mala bring about? How will pooja, prayers and Kirtan help? These are all external things. At times I am distressed at the way man's mind works. The same man gives both opposing views and still it does not occur to him that it is his mind saying both the things! When he is asked to go within. his mind says: "How can you go within without any tangible help?" When he is given an outside aid, his mind says: "How can an outside agency help? You have to go within." And the most wonderful part is, that our foolishness is so sound that we fail to understand the trickery of our mind. Every time we make an effort to awaken, the mind promptly devises ways of putting us back to sleep and these excuses are at times so paltry. so trivial.

A friend came to me today and said: "You always say one should not give pain to others. If I put on the clothes of a sannyasin, my wife will be pained." So I asked him: "When did you hear me?" He said, "Ten years ago." Have you given no cause for complaint to your wife in these ten years? If so, I consider you a sannyasin already. There is no need for you to change your clothes." He said: "I cannot say, I gave no cause for complaint to my wife." In that case, I said, "You never came, and asked me for other pains you inflicted on your wife. You merrily went about causing her pain and now you have become so considerate of your wife's feelings when it comes to changing your clothes?" Man's foolishness is incomparable! For everything else, this man is ready to do as he pleases without a twinge of conscience but when it comes to taking sannyas – oh, he is so considerate of those around him!

What is most confounding is, that we never step aside and watch our mind, how it tricks us into sleep. It brings forth such excuses as seem very correct. But this wife is just an excuse. The mind is the real thing and it is the mind that prompts. when eyeing the neighbour's wife, the mind puts forth no pious suggestions! Then it said on the contrary: "What wife, what love? These are all make-shift arrangements. Who really is your own in this world?" Then the wife is shelved in a corner, out of sight!

But as soon as any step is taken to go beyond the mind. the mind quickly comes forward with a hundred plausible suggestions to put us back to sleep. The door of paradise does open but the mind quickly puts us off with a thousand excuses.

Lao Tzu says: "Desire is the mind. There is no way of entering the depths of existence without becoming desireless."

Question 1

QUESTION: BHAGWAN SRI, PLEASE EXPLAIN WHETHER THESE STATEMENTS OF LAO TZU ARE NOT MEANT FOR A DEFEATED EXISTENCE. FOR AN ANGUISHED PERSON? IS THERE NOT A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE, A SORT OF DEFEATISM AT THE ROOT OF THESE TEACHINGS? WOULD NOT THESE ETHICS, OF ACCEPTANCE OF THINGS, AS THEY ARE, GIVE LICENCE TO THE GOVERNMENT TO EXPLOIT THE PEOPLE? AND FINALLY, CAN THIS NOT BE CALLED A PURE THEORETICAL IDEALISM? THESE TEACHINGS ARE NOT AT ALL PRACTICAL. THERE ARE NO MEANS OF ATTAINING FREEDOM FROM DESIRES OR OF AWAKENING IN THEM.

Bhagwan Sri: Lao Tzu does not believe in remedies for he says, "Only desires require remedy". No remedy is required for desirelessness. Remedy means a device followed to reach somewhere. A path means an arrangement to connect with a destina-tion – a bridge or some means of connection.

Lao Tzu says "It is only desires which require a device, a path, effort, struggle." For desirelessness, understanding is enough. No device, no method is necessary – according to Lao Tzu. He who understands Lao Tzu's teachings in their entirety needs no methods or principles to go by. All concepts are toys given to the non-understanding; an arrangement to help them to let-go step by step as they are incapable of doing so all at once.

Lao Tzu says: "Understanding alone!" If you become conscious of the labyrinth of the mind, you will step out of it this moment. No other method is necessary. If I know that this cup contains poison, it

will automatically drop from my hands. I shall have to make no effort to let it go. If I under-stand well that fire burns, my hand will not go towards it, without any effort on my part.

Remedies and methods are required where there is no understanding. Where there is understanding, they become redundant. Therefore there are two ways: One of method – of ignorance. The ignorant man says, "I have no knowledge. Show me some technique, some method by-which I can develop my understanding." Ignorance, lack of understanding, demands methods. It cannot exist without them. Comprehension requires no such thing. You understand – and there the matter ends. It is enough that you understand. There is a reason for this.

People like Lao Tzu think that actually, we are not bound; we only are under an illusion of being bound. We are not ill – we are simply ignorant. There are two things: One man is ill, he is really ill. An actual illness has caught hold of him. Then he requires medicines, treatment is necessary. But there is another man who is not at all ill but who imagines himself to be ill. Treating such a person with medicines will not prove only costly but also dangerous. There is the possibility of the medicine triggering off new illnesses. This man only needs to understand that he is not ill, he is only suffering from an illusion. If such a man has to be treated, he can be given only sugar pills and water as medicines to console him that he is being treated. Lao Tzu's opinion is – and it is the right opinion – that life's difficulty is ignorance. Life itself is not difficult to understand.

We are not really estranged from God – we only think so. We have not really gone away from life, we only think so. We have not lost the treasures of life, we have only forgotten them. If this is so, then Lao Tzu says, "Where is the need for devices?" There is no question for remedy. Understanding is enough. Understanding is the remedy.

Buddha has said: "For those who do not understand, I have devised methods. For those who understand, I have given them understanding. There the matter ends." This is almost like the case of hundreds of people who visit the psychologists. They have no illness but suffer from the illusion that they are ill; and this makes them more ill than those who are genuinely ill. So they have to be treated. And what is the treatment. What do Freud and Jung do? Nothing, except they help the patient to recount his illness and in the course of this talk, if the patient develops understanding, he manages to step out of his illness; if not he remains within his hallucinations.

The problem of life is not a veritable problem of illness. It is a problem of a pseudo-illness. Therefore, Lao Tzu does not talk of remedies. He says, "Be without help – without resources – that is the only remedy. Know, understand and be settled – this is the only way."

Lao Tzu's instructions are not for the defeated or the despondent. This is interesting and needs to be understood for this question does arise in the mind. People like Lao Tzu sound as if they are escapists. They say: "Desire nothing". If we do not desire, how will we Progress? But how many have progressed by their ambition – can we count them?

Someone asked Aldous Huxley – whose three generations had worked for the progress of mankind – to give a detailed account of whether man had profited by the efforts of his forefathers; whether man was happier, more at peace, more blissful than what he was 5,000 years ago. Huxley said, "If you had asked of my great grandfather, he would have boldly said, 'Yes'. If you had asked my father, he would have hesitated. But I – I can give no reply!" No: Man is neither happy, nor peaceful nor blissful. There has been a lot of progress otherwise."

From Lao Tzu's talks, it seems all progress will stop; but is man required for progress or progress required for man? If man is required for progress than it is alright that he be sacrificed at the altar of progress. If man dies, let him die but the slow moving 10 miles/hour vehicle must be replaced with the a 100m/ hour vehicle. It does not matter if man lives or dies. The stars and the moon are to be conquered, no matter if the travellers live or die. If progress is the goal then Lao Tzu is wrong. But if man is the goal, his bliss, his savour is the aim, then what Lao Tzu says is 100

Remember, by running it does not mean that you have reached. By running alone one does not reach but the logic of the mind says, if you do not run, you do not reach! Lao Tzu says, "The supreme wealth of Existence can only be experienced and known by he who halts and not by he who runs." It is not Lao Tzu alone who says this. Buddha, Mahavira, Patanjali are of the same opinion. All those who have known have said the same thing. If that is so, all enlightened people are escapists and all ignorant people are progressive.

It is also very interesting that all these ignorant people, who are seemingly progressive, ultimately seek shelter at the feet of some Lao Tzu, begging for peace; whereas, Lao Tzu never goes begging at the fed of the ignorant, for progress. The progressive has always ended up at the feet of the escapist but the escapist has never approached a progressive in search of happiness. This is true without exceptions. Lao Tzu has eyes to see, so has Buddha; they can see how far the progressive has reached, whereas they have lagged behind. And yet, it is the progressive man who seeks refuge at the feet of Buddha or Lao Tzu, and begs to be shown the way to peace and happiness.

No, this is not escapism. It is a matter of condition. Words are not dangerous, their connotations make them so. If my house catches fire and I run out, you can say I am an escapist. In verbal terms, this is correct – I am forsaking the house for it has caught fire. But it is not wise to stay within a house that has caught fire. If it is sensible to stay within a house on fire then it is an act of bravery to stand before a truck in full speed. He who steps aside at the honk of a speeding truck, is an escapist, for in the hour of trial he is losing courage! If we understand well the conditions of life, we will know that Lao Tzu is not runn-ing away from life. He only steps aside from the follies of life, he is only stepping aside from the fire, the disease. He goes deep within life. We who think that we are going ahead in life are progressing in sheer ignorance alone and are being cheated out of life.

What is the ultimate test? We should compare our face with Lao Tzu's. Lao Tzu is not worried even at the time of death and we are filled with anxiety even when we are alive! Lao Tzu is happy to embrace death and we cannot even embrace life. Lao Tzu laughs in illness, we cry even when we are well. What is the proof? If Lao Tzu is offered thorns, he is filled with gratitude; if someone places a flower in our hands, we do not even feel grateful. No; What is the way through which we can know? What is the measure? Lao Tzu is not an escapist.

And if Lao Tzu is an escapist, everyone should be an escapist. Then escapism should be our religion for Lao Tzu escapes from the futile and enters the purposeful-ness and meaning of life.

It seems as if there is defeatism and despondency in his words. Is he afraid of life? Has he no strength to fight? Perhaps he is weak and therefore he steps aside. But there is no sign of weakness in Lao Tzu. The strength that effuses from people like Lao Tzu, Christ and Buddha is unsurpassable.

Those whom we call progressive gradually begin to show signs of nervousness. Their limbs begin

to tremble and they are filled with a thousand fears. The psychologists of America of today say that there are hardly 10

No progressive man can sleep as soundly as Lao Tzu nor can he eat with such joy and relish – nor can he digest his food so efficaciously. He does not enjoy Lao Tzu's health, nor his fearlessness. He cannot enjoy the silence that is within Lao Tzu nor the ever-flowing stream of bliss within him, which gives no indication of defeat or despondency.

He is not a defeated man – this Lao Tzu. On the contrary he says: "No one has ever defeated me." And when someone asks the reason why, he says: "Because I have never wished to conquer anyone. I can only be defeated if I am out to conquer somebody. I wish to conquer no one." We might think Lao Tzu is afraid to fight but Lao Tzu says: "I do not wish to fight for there is nothing worth fighting for in your world. The paltry, things you set out to conquer are too ordinary for my consideration. Then why create this fuss of conquering trivial things? If you set out to conquer you will be defeated and even if you win, you gain nothing. If you lose you are burdened with restlessness and distress. So I did not set out to conquer; not that I was afraid of defeat but because there was nothing worth conquering."

The question that rises within our mind is but natural. We feel this can only be the view-point of a pessimist but then a pessimist is a sad and unhappy person whereas Lao Tzu is not an unhappy man. We, the so-called optimists appear unhappy. When the scriptures of Buddha were translated for the first time in the West, they branded him as a pessimist par excellence! For they say he says, "birth is pain, old age is affliction, life is sorrow, death is pain – everything is pain". But they did not take the trouble of gazing at his face. He is a pessimist, you are an optimist, so there should be signs of happiness on your face. But there is no sign of happiness evident on your face! This man who says "Birth is pain, life is agony, everything gives pain", his bliss knows no bounds!

Then there is certainly some place where we have erred. Buddha says, "Life is sorrow. He who realises this, attains bliss. He who thinks life to be blissful, attains nothing but misery." This calculation of Buddha is very profound. Buddha and Lao Tzu both say: "He who takes life to be happiness, ends up in sorrow, for life is sorrow." If I look upon a thorn as a flower, the thorn is bound to prick me and cause pain, for it is a thorn a nd not a flower; but if I know a thorn to be a thorn, it cannot hurt me. It can only hurt me if I take it to be a flower. Buddha says: "Life is sorrow – know this. Then no one can snatch your joy away from you." But if you take life as happiness, you will fall into unhappiness for you will have started a chain of illusions.

Lao Tzu is not a pessimist. He is an extreme optimist. He is at the pinnacle of supreme bliss.

There was a famous disciple of Lao Tzu by the name of Chwang-Tse. He was called by the emperor of China to come and be his prime-minister. Chuang-Tse sent back a message to him: "There is no happiness beyond the joy I am in. By making me your prime-minister you will be dragging me down from my heights; for there is no joy beyond this. Now to go forward in any direction, is to go back. To move an inch from where I am, is to lose. There is no greater bliss than that I am in."

You might think this man is mad to lose such a golden opportunity. When the emperor himself calls him to be his prime-minister, he should have grabbed the opportunity. But Chwang-Tse's understanding tells him that if he moved the slightest bit from the supreme bliss he was in, he would fall for there is nothing further beyond it.

When Lao Tzu or Chuang-Tse or anyone else talks of Tathata (That which Is), when they talk of acceptability, it is not out of frustration or distress. It is not also because it is a good thing to be contented in life. The attitude of acceptance comes about for two reasons: One is, a man accepts because there is no way out. Then at least there is consolation. But Lao Tzu's acceptability, is not this explanation of Tathata (That which Is).

Lao Tzu says, "The man who says there is satisfaction in acceptance is as yet refusing to accept, for if there is no denial then where is the dissatisfaction?" I say there is a thorn in my foot. If I am to accept this, at least there will be the satisfaction of acceptance of the fact. It pains, let me accept – but there is denial behind this acceptance. In truth, my acceptance is a form of non-acceptance. I am in pain, I am in agony but when there is no way out, I close my eyes and accept the fact. Then I console myself that perhaps this too, is a divine mystery; the curse may be a blessing. The glistening flash of lightning lies hidden behind black clouds and the flower hides within the thorns, so happiness hides behind sorrow. But my search is the search of happiness for the bright streak of light; I do not accept the black clouds. And when the night is at its darkest, morn is close by – but my eyes search only for the dawn! By keeping the desire of dawn, I try to lessen the darkness of the night. I am trying to be contented.

But Lao Tzu does not talk of this Tathata. He says, "Acceptability not for the sake of contentment, rather because non-acceptability is foolishness." Non-acceptance does nothing but drag a man into hell. Lao Tzu stresses more the need to under-stand non-acceptability rather than acceptability. The day I understand clearly that I create my own hell by non-acceptance, that very day non-acceptance will vanish. What then remains will be acceptability. Understand this reasoning.

There is one acceptability which we impose against non-acceptance. There is another acceptability that results on the disappearance of non-acceptability. There is a difference between the two. When there is denial within and we impose acceptance without, a conflict is created. There is denial within and acceptance without: My friend dies. I say to myself, "That is how it is. I shall have to accept the fact. There is no other way." Then I keep telling myself that everyone has to go one day or the other. Death comes to everyone. Who has lived forever in this world? I try to console myself this way but the pain throbs within. The friend is gone, the emptiness troubles. The mind wails within: "This should not have happened. It is bad. it is bad!" From without I console the mind: "Death happens. It has always been happening. We cannot escape it." These two things go on simultaneously. I try to dress the wound from with-out but it remains bleeding within.

Lao Tzu does not advocate such acceptance, or Tathata. He says, "I am not pained at the death of my friend. I only wonder how he remained alive all this time!" Life is an impossible happening. Death is a natural happening. Death is no wonder whereas Life is a wonder.

Lao Tzu says: "How do we manage to remain alive so long?"

I have mentioned Chuang-Tse to you. His wife died. The emperor went to condole him. He found him playing a tambourine on his door-step. His legs out-stretched, he was singing a song. In the morning he bade farewell to his wife and at noon he sits playing the tambourine! The emperor hesitated. He had come prepared with condolences as we usually are when someone dies. We are such experts at this game that we even have the dialogue by heart! We know exactly what is to be said and what would be the answer. So the king was prepared for his part but he found that things

were quite the opposite here. The old dialogue would not hold water here. Chuang-Tse was singing and he was filled with joy.

The king however could not with-hold himself. He said: "Chuang-Tse, it is enough that you show no grief but for God's sake do not play- the tambourine!"

And do you know what Chuang-Tse said in reply? He said: "Either I should grieve or play the tambourine. There is nothing in between. And why should I be sad? I thank God who gave her life for so many days – wonder of wonders! How well she served me and so long – ah wonder! And the love she showered on me – oh most beautiful wonder! And if I do not bid farewell to her with music in these parting moments, it would be an improper act on my part! I am giving her a send-off. Now she goes further and further away from this world and the sound of my tambourine must be fading away softly. I have bidden her a joyful farewell."

We are such, we are not happy even when staying together and we call ourselves optimists! And here is Chuang-Tse bidding farewell to his wife with joy and we call him a pessimist! Then our optimism and pessimism is very strange. We are pessimists, for we are filled with pain and sorrow all the twenty-four hours. Chuang-Tse is one from among the extreme Optimists.

Lao Tzu does not ask us to accept out of helplessness. No, he says accept with all your strength all your power, all your might. It requires great strength and valour to accept life as such. Someone throws a stone at Mahavira. Mahavira stands still. To us it would occur: "What a coward! He should return a stone for a stone!" But Mahavira just stands – not out of cowardice but because of a great strength – a supreme power. He possesses such gigantic energy that stones do not hurt him. They start no reaction within him. And he who throws the stone is childish. Mahavira is filled with compassion for him and pities him for his vain labour.

We can do only one of the two things: Either we return a stone for a stone or we run away. We know no third alternative. But Mahavira knows. He neither runs away nor does he throw back a stone. He does not take the stone in at all! The stone causes no intervention within him at all. And the stone causes him no harm. On the contrary it proves useful for it helps him to be more firmly established in his supreme peace and bliss. He is not swayed an inch here or there.

All religions are born through great prowess and valour and all religions are born out of fearlessness, not fear. And all religions are consecrated in bliss, never in pain. The maxim of pain is the demand for happiness and to be consecrated in bliss is to accept pain.

Question 2

QUESTION: ARE NOT LAO TZU'S INSTRUCTIONS ON LIFE BASED ON PESSIMISM AND ESCAPISM?

WHAT IS MEANT BY UNDERSTANDING?

Bhagwan Sri: Whatever happens in life can happen in two ways: One with understanding and the other without under-standing. An example will make things easy:

You abuse me and I am filled with anger. Does your abuse at once give birth to anger within me or is there a happening of understanding between the two? When you abuse me do I try to see within myself how the anger is born by your abuse? Do I go within and see whether anger should arise or should not arise? Do I see within what anger is? I see nothing of this. All I know is, you abused and I got angry; there is no gap in between. On one hand is the abuse, on the other, anger. You pressed a button and I flared up – then I behave like a machine! This behaviour is the behaviour born out of ignorance.

You abuse me and I see what is rising within me and why. Where does the abuse touch me, what wound it disturbs within me, where does it hurt me and why? What is there in the abuse that fills me with rage, what is there in the abuse that fills me with poison? All this I examine within myself and then I see this poison rising within me, this anger ascending from within, this fire ravaging within me – I see it and I understand it. Then what I do will be out of understanding. It is interesting to note that one can only be angry in ignorance and never knowingly. Therefore, if when you abuse, I worry more about my understanding of the reaction within me, anger becomes impossible. You abuse me and I do not watch myself within, then only is anger possible.

This is why, people like Lao Tzu say that there is no need to take measures to remove anger. No mantras or charms, no oaths or vows are necessary. Understand anger and anger becomes impossible.

A Western friend is practising meditation. He is here with us. His trouble is anger. He is so filled with anger that it overflows at the slightest excuse. I advised him to vent his anger on a pillow. He was surprised! ”That is madness!” He exclaimed. ”On a pillow?” I told him, ”You start and see, it is not so bad. If you could vent your anger on a human being and not see the foolishness of it. It is not more foolish to take it out on a pillow I assure you.” He tried the first day and came and gave me a complete report. He felt a little awkward in the beginning. After five or seven minutes when the momentum built up, he started hitting the pillow hard as if it were alive. Not only did the pillow become alive but it assumed the form of the person he hated most. He remembered this foe and all that had happened ten years ago. He had wished to beat him up but could not. He says he felt to laugh, he felt very uneasy too but he enjoyed it also!

Since the last three days he is beating up his pillow. Today he has given the final report and it is very astonishing.

The full report is like this: The very first day all the faces of people he had wanted to hit and could not, began to come up. The next day all faces disappeared. There was no one before him, there was plain anger alone. He saw the anger coming out from within him and there was no one to receive it at the other end – pure anger. Then it occurred to him that all this was already within him, he only needed excuses to throw out the poison within him. Then an understanding arose. He saw anger in a new form. Now the responsibility of anger, shifted from the other person. Now he knew that there was a fire within him that needed to come out. Now the responsibility shifted on him – it no longer was objective, it became subjective. It was no longer that the other abused and the anger arose. Now he understood that he was wanting to be angry and was looking out for excuses. If no one had abused him, he would have found some other excuse. He would have even gone to the extent of inciting someone to abuse him! And the simple reason for all this was, that there was something within him that was pressing for release. It was necessary to be rid of it.

The next day in the course of these beatings that he carried out 3-4 times a day, it became absolutely clear to him that the anger was not because of another but was within him. Today was his third day. He told me: "I am shocked at myself". As soon as the realisation came that the anger is not on someone, that the anger is already within myself, something departed from within – everything was peaceful. Now I have become absolutely weak and incompetent to be angry. If you abuse me now, I shall be unable to express anger. At least I find myself incapable of doing so at this moment. Some load has come off me and I feel empty within."

Understanding means: Whatever happens within you is with your full consciousness and in your full awareness – Whatever happens. Then many things will stop happening by themselves. What stops happening, is sin; and what keeps happening even in your full consciousness is virtue. Understanding is the test. Whatever can go on with understanding is virtue. What does not go along with understanding, is sin. What can be activated in ignorance alone, is sin and that which cannot be activated in ignorance, is virtue. So understanding means only this: that whatever happens within me, happens with my full knowledge and nothing slips from my consciousness.

Whatever happens to you, happens outside your consciousness. You do not know when you are filled with anger or filled with love, when you are happy, when you are sad – everything happens in your unconsciousness. Suddenly you find yourself happy, suddenly sad. You feel a terrible melancholia and you look for the cause outside of you. You do not realise it is coming from within you. You begin to blame your son or daughter, your wife or husband or your business. You set out to find and you end up by making a scapegoat of someone or the other.

These are simply excuses-pegs. You think you would not do all this if you are by yourself. You will! If you are locked up in a room all alone, you will do all that you do to another person. You think you talk only when a friend meets you. If you are left to yourself, you will begin talking to an illusory friend. You think yoU are angered because someone irritated you. Put yourself in a room and in 15 days' time you will find you have become angry hundreds of times. You then vent your anger on your shirt or on the bath-room tap! You will find a thousand ways.

If what happens within you, happens with your full consciousness it becomes a different thing altogether. No happening of my inner existence should happen in my unconsciousness – this is understanding. What is interesting to note is, that once understanding is born within us, all that is wrong stops happening on its own. Without understanding, even with your best efforts, you will not be able to do the right thing. This is why the whole stress of Lao Tzu is on understanding, knowledge and wisdom.

The rest tomorrow.

CHAPTER 4

The mysterious Tao – beyond ignorance and knowledge

22 June 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 1: SUTRA 4

UNDER THESE TWO ASPECTS, IT IS REALLY THE SAME; BUT AS DEVELOPMENT TAKES PLACE, IT RECEIVES THE DIFFERENT NAMES. TOGETHER WE CALL THEM THE MYSTERY. WHERE THE MYSTERY IS THE DEEPEST, IS THE GATE OF ALL THAT IS SUBTLE AND WONDERFUL.

The One alone resides within the two.

Wherever the intellect sees duality, the Existence is yet one alone.

We might say that the intellect has the habit of breaking into two whatever it sees. As soon as the mind alights upon something, it cannot help breaking it into two. There are reasons for this. The mind rejects the irrational. The mind cannot contain the opposite, it leaves aside the contradiction.

The mind looks at life but it is impossible for it to see death in life. Death seems just the opposite of life. It has no relationship with life's reasoning. It looks as if death is the end of life, the enemy of life. It looks as if death is outside of life, an assault on life. It is really not so. Death is not a happening outside of life. It happens within life. It is a part of life. Death is the completion of life.

Life and death are like the in-going breath and the outgoing breath. The same breath that goes in, comes out. The breath that goes in at birth, comes out at death. Life and death are one in Existence. But when the mind begins to think, it can accept the apposite but not the inapposite. From the rational point of view, life and death become two separate happenings.

But Existence accepts the irrational also. It accepts the opposite, the contradictory also; Existence finds no difficulty in growing the flower and the thorn on the same branch. It finds no difficulty in working light and darkness together. The fact is, darkness is a dim form of light and light is the less dense state of darkness.

If we remove light from the earth, the intellect says, only darkness will remain. But the fact is. if light is removed, there will be no darkness also. To explain more simply: If we remove heat altogether from the world, the intellect will say, only cold will remain. The fact is, what we know as cold is a part of heat. Therefore, if heat disappears, cold will also simultaneously disappear. If we banish death completely, life also will end. Existence is together with the opposites.

The mind throws out the opposite. The intellect is a very small thing. Existence is very vast. It is beyond the mind to understand that the opposites are one and the same; that life and death are the same, that love and hate, darkness and light, hell and heaven are one and the same. The intellect cannot visualize happiness and sorrow as two names of the same thing. How can it understand for it says, happiness is quite different from sorrow and pain. We have to strive for happiness and save ourselves from pain. We have to shut out pain and invite joy.

But Existence says, ”He who calls happiness, invites unhappiness also and he who tries to escape unhappiness, has perforce to forego happiness also.” The opposites are one in Existence.

And Lao Tzu says: ”UNDER THESE TWO ASPECTS, IT IS REALLY THE SAME.”

That which is within the named and that which is within the unnamed, are one and the same.

Lao Tzu in the beginning vehemently affirms that the Path that can be trodden is not the Path and the Name that can be named is not the Name. And now Lao Tzu says: ”That which is within the named and that which is within the unnamed are one and the same” – they are in actuality, the same. It is again the duality of our own intellect that says that this is the world of objects and that is the world of Existence; that this is the world of names and that is the world of the un-named; that this is the world of forms and that is the world of the formless; that this is the world of the individual and that is the world of the non-individual. Lao Tzu says, ”No, they both contain the One in actuality.” The Un-named also resides within the one we name and the one we call un-named, we have given a name already! What difference does it make if we call it Un-named?

We have named it Un-named!

This will be rather difficult to understand as Lao Tzu has said most expressly in the beginning that these to are absolutely apart. ”Give no name,” he has said, ”for as soon as you name it, it becomes a falsity. Do not express. it, for the very expression deforms it. Walk not on it, for it is a changeless path. THE PATH CANNOT BE TRODDEN” – and now, soon after, he says. ”It is the one and the same that resides in both. It is One alone.”

It is hard to follow Lao Tzu’s logic, for this statement is even more profound than the previous ones. The same is in name, the same is in form. When I look out of my window, I see the skies in a particular form but this very limited form of the skies become boundless as soon as I step out in the open. Then will I say the sky I saw from the window was different? The difference is definitely there.

When I saw through the window, it was bounded within the frame-work of the window. Now when I see in the open, there is no frame-work, no lines to bind it. Appa-rently the difference is definitely there; but deep within, where is the difference?

What was seen from the window was the formless and no other. The error lay not with the sky but with the window. And how can a window give shape to the skies? If a small thing like a window can give shape to the vast skies, it would be mightier than the skies. So, that which the mind has known by giving a name is the same as that, which the wise have know by going beyond the mind, as without a name: 'Name-less'!

Lao Tzu says, "You cannot reach there by travelling on this Path, you have to halt." He who halts reaches, whereas one who journeys keeps plodding. There is no difference between the two, no distance.

Lao Tzu has dealt a heavy blow to dualism with this short statement; a final blow, in which he has tried to contain the opposites in one. It should be understood once for all, that all dualities are the creation of the mind. Existence is unfamiliar with it. Existence has never known dualities. The most opposite and conflicting things are united and joined in Existence. Nay, they are one and the same. We have to use the terms, joined and united, for it is our mind that is in the, habit of breaking and seeing things. It cannot see otherwise.

We see two sides in a coin and both these sides are together, joined. Can we separate the two sides of a coin? Can we keep one side of the coin and throw away the other? Do what we may, there will always be two sides to the coin. One side of the coin is the same coin and the other side also is a part of the very same coin. Yet, when we look at a coin, we cannot see both the sides at the same time. When we see one side, the other is hidden and vice versa.

Berkeley, the great philosopher of the West used to say: "When you step out of the room the things in the room, disappear in the void. When you step back into the room, the things appear again. And when there is no one in the room, there are no objects in the room." He challenged any one to dispute his statement. No one did, for it is impossible. One has to be within the room, in order to investigate and Berkeley says, "Things appear as long as the seer is present and disappear when the seer is absent. Without the seer, the seen cannot be. If you make a hole and peep in the room, the viewer becomes present and things appear."

What Berkeley is trying to say is that there is an intimate connection between the seer and the seen. It is certainly not true that things are not the same, in the absence of the viewer, as they are in his presence.

Now Physics admits the fact, that when you leave the room, the objects within it lose colour. All things within a closed room become colourless. Then what does the painting in your room look like? It is a painting no longer. The contention of Physics is, that colours are formed in collaboration with the eyes. If I can see that the colour of your clothes is white, it is not dependent on the colour of your clothes. It is my eyes that see them white. If there were no eyes in the room, your clothes would have no colour. Colour is directly connected with the eyes.

It is not necessary that things have the same shape as you see them because, form also is connected with the eyes. If objects however, are still present in the room when we are out of it

they cannot be retaining the same shape as we see them and we cannot ever see them in the form they assume in our absence.

Emanuel Kant, the German thinker, used to say: ”Things cannot be known in themselves.” We can only know things as we can see them and in no other way. In fact, whatever we know depends directly on our ability to know. It is not that there are only those present who have gathered here today. There might be a spider somewhere in this room, a lizard on the wall, a worm on the floor or a fly; and all these see this room from their own angle of vision. It is possible that the spider experiences things we have never experienced or the insect on the floor hears sounds we can never hear. It is also absolutely certain that all these creatures are unfamiliar with what we see, hear and know.

The seer is invariably present in whatever we see. The intellect gives shape and pattern to whatever it sees. The most deep-seated framework of the intellect is the pattern of duality. The first thing it does, is to break things into two at the very outset and separate the opposites.

Everything is formed by both the opposites. I may say, I am never angry, I can only be forgiving but without anger there is no forgiveness. Or can there be? If you have not been angry, how can you forgive? It is necessary to be angry first, in order to forgive. Forgiveness comes in the wake of anger, it comes as the latter part of anger. Without anger forgiveness is not possible. But we see these two apart from each other. We say, ”So and so is a wrathful man” or ”So-and-so is very forgiving”. We can never bring ourselves to say that anger in itself, is forgiveness.

The intellect breaks all things on all levels of existence. And Lao Tzu says that the One is hidden behind all these sections and fragments. No matter how many parts the intellect tries to make, the One remains indivisible and whole – always. No matter how many lines we draw, it remains boundless. Whether we name it, or do not name it, it is still One. So the first thing that Lao Tzu says is: ”Within the entire duality and divinity, it is this One alone, that resides.”

Here we are sitting within this room. There are these four walls around us that have separated the space within the room from the space without. Have you ever thought how you can break space? No sword can break it and no wall, for the wall itself has to be within space. The space is filled in every pore of the walls. The outside space and the inside space are divisions created by us, and do not exist in reality. It helps us in our day to day existence. It would be difficult to sleep in the open space outside but we sleep comfortably within the space of our room. So the difference is there. It is raining in the space outside but we sit safe within the space of our room without a care. All the same, it is we who have divided the space into two.

We cannot divide space. It is one invisible whole. Within and without are our own make-shift arrangements. The same that is within, is without and the same that is without is within. These two words – without and within – are also creations of the duality of our mind or else, there is nothing that is within and nothing that is without. One alone is and it is this one only that we sometimes say is within and sometimes without.

The duality mentioned by Lao Tzu, Buddha, is very superficial. Within, at the very core, in the profound depths of Existence, there is only One just as when a tree emerges from the soil, it is only one, in the beginning. Then soon the branches begin to shoot out and these keep multiplying. So

Lao Tzu says ”As Evolution proceeds, as there is further expansion, the many are born and myriads of names come into being.”

The Hindus had visualised life as a tree, some 5,000 years ago, and Liberation as a tree, upside down. Samsara (the material life) is a tree that is born of one and becomes many. At first there is one branch, then many appear; then each branch further gives rise to many other branches and these in turn spread into a number of leaves. Liberation is just the opposite. Here we journey from the many branches, to less and less branches till we ultimately reach the trunk of the tree. Then from this one, we travel downwards to the seed form which everything was born and from which everything was developed.

Lao Tzu says that as soon as unfoldment occurs, as soon as development begins and things start appearing, they become many. The seed is always one, but the tree that comes out of it develops and divides itself into so many branches and leaves. Then on these numerous branches, countless seeds are formed – all from a single seed. In exactly the same manner, Existence is One and is without Name (Anam). Then many branches of names spring out of it. Truth is One – 'Wordless'. Then many leaves and branches of words spring out of it. Lao Tzu says, ”Yet That which is in One is the very same that which is in many.” That which is in the seed is also in the leaves. How can it be another? There is no way for it to be another. There is no other.

In the second part of the statement it is said that as expansion and development proceeds, people begin to call it by different names but it does not diversify in actuality. I have said, ”The tree is one in the seed and becomes many in the branches”. This, however, is also so in the eyes of the beholder who is looking at it from the outside. The tree feels its roots and branches to be one and the same. Within there is the same flow, the stream of the same essence.

Do you feel your toes, your head, your eyes or your fingers as different and apart from each other? On closing the eyes, one sees the continuous flow of the same energy, in which all forms fade. To one who sees you from without, your eyes and your fingers are different and apart from each other. But within? If the finger is broken, the eyes are not damaged but this too is from without only. Within, the broken finger causes the eyes to weaken and the loss of the eye leaves the fingers helpless. Within there is the same stream of energy. that flows everywhere. There is no the slightest difference.

If we ask the physiologist he will tell us the same. Many a rare thing the Physiologist says and the latest research is re-establishing the very old secrets once more.

The modern Biologist says that our eyes and our feet are formed of the same kind of cells. There is no difference in their composition at all. The only difference is that the older cells have specialised in one particular function. The substance of the body is the same. It is only that a particular part has specialised in seeing, another in hearing, yet another in the field of touch. But these are only specialisations. The fundamental composition, the life-principle, is one and the same. There is not the slightest difference. The delicate pupil of the eye is also a part of the skin. It is the skin of the eye which has specialised in the sensitive art of seeing. The scientists claim that the skin of any other part of the body if trained, can develop the quality of seeing, tor both are made of the same elements.

When a child is conceived in the mother's womb, it has neither eyes, nor ears, nor nose nor limbs. In the early stages of conception there is nothing save the cells. The initial cell divides and re-divides. Therefore all these cells cannot be different in composition from the initial cell. Then gradually some specialise and form the eyes, others form the ears, yet others form the heart and so on.

It is the same cell that spreads and causes the differentiation evident in the body. The tree is one but the branches seem different and apart. The life-stream is one, but each thing as it unfolds, looks different and apart. The cell that is formed in the mother's womb is initially closed. Then when it opens, it will break through, unfold itself and spread. As it spreads, its needs increase and according to each need its various parts begin to function in various ways. Then when they begin to perform various tasks, they shall have various names. This we can understand better by an example:

The Hindus have always said that this world also has been formed from a single cell, just like the human cell and that the life-principle is only one, Then as things develop and unfold, they begin to diversify and fall apart from each other. Lao Tzu is saying the same thing. He says: "People call it by different names." As I too, have been telling you: "Truth is One but those who have known, have known it in different ways." The Secret is One but the sages have called it by different names. It is only the names that can be different, but because of them the delusion of separateness forms within our minds. Then the error is committed of viewing things as distinct from each other. It is only when the delusion breaks that we can conceive of the 'Indivisible', the Absolute.

Lao Tzu says, "The Conception of such an Indivisible is the Absolute itself." It is recollected by different names, yet it is one and the same. It is this multitude of names that is the secret – the mystery. What is the mystery of this world?

Science does not accept mystery but Religion does. This is the only difference between Science and Religion. Science believes that there is no secret in the Universe. The mystery lessens with each discovery. In other words, lack of knowledge is the only mystery. According to Science the meaning of mystery is ignorance. What we do not know, we consider a mystery. The mystery ends as soon as we know. And what does Science do in order to know?

If we understand correctly, we shall find that Science says just the opposite of what Lao Tzu says. What does Science do? It goes about giving names to things. As soon as it is able to name a thing, it considers it has known it fully. It gives a technical term to whatever it discovers and feels it has known all about it. This is why Science is becoming more and more specialised day by day.

There was an age when Science was one. Then it began to diversify. Then the various branches of science began to diversify in greater details and these details in turn began to diversify.

There was a time when all science came within the single fold of Philosophy. This is why even today our universities confer the degrees of Ph. D. even on those who have nothing to do with philosophy. Now a man carries out research in Chemistry. He is also given the degree of Ph. D. This is a thousand-year old habit. A man is given the degree of Doctor of Philosophy when he has not the remotest connection with philosophy!

But a thousand years ago, Chemistry was a part of Philosophy. Aristotle wrote a book, two thousand years ago. Today, the heading of each chapter of his book, has become a science in itself. The most

interesting fact is, that the chapter on Physics, is followed by a chapter on Religion. This is why the West looked upon Greek Religion as Meta-Physics. Meta-Physics means the chapter following Physics. Even today, the old board on the Physics Department of the Oxford University bears the caption: 'Department of Natural Philosophy'. A thousand years ago, Physics was Natural Philosophy. Later on, the divisions followed.

Science is bound to be divided because the more we want to know, the more organised methods we employ to know a thing, the narrower will be the field of our research. The more we want to know about a thing in its entirety, the lesser the number of things we shall have to choose. Therefore, the definition of science is, 'To know more and more about less and less'. When we reduce the number, things will begin to contract. Now Physics is also not one whole subject – it is divided into several parts. Similarly, Chemistry has several divisions also, of which Organic Chemistry and Inorganic Chemistry are the two main divisions. And these will again be broken more and more into lesser fragments. Science is thus now reaching from the roots towards the leaves, thus going further and further away from the Mystery.

Lao Tzu says: "To be the One that is between the name and the nameless, is the mystery. That is called the mystery." In fact, he who journeys towards the 'Indivisible', travels towards the mystery and he who travels towards the 'Many', goes away from the mystery. Therefore, Science is gradually revoking the mystery. It says, "There is no mystery. We shall know all there is to know." Yet the mystery stands where it was.

The method of knowing employed by Science is such that it shall be deprived of the knowledge of the Mystery. Therefore, as Science advanced, man's attitude towards the mystery receded. The greatest damage done by Science to religion is the lessening of man's disposition towards the mystery.

Now there seems to be no mystery. Everything is known. You look at a flower. Someone says, "It is beautiful." You say, "Non-sense! Where is the beauty? It has such and such colours, it is made of such and such elements." You can get it analysed and the Scientist will tell you what all it consists of. Nowhere will you then find beauty in the flower. As soon as we begin to know all the facts of a particular thing and give it names, the Indivisible that resides within the thing, disappears. It gets lost and with it is lost all the mystery.

Lao Tzu says: "That which has been given countless names by us and which still is One, that alone is the mystery. That which is One inspite of being the many, that alone we call the Mystery. That which appears as several and which is yet One alone, that we call the mystery. That which looks divided in duality but which yet, is undivided, that we call the Mystery."

Understand well the meaning of Mystery. Mystery means: 'That which we know and yet remains unknown'. In the language of Religion this meaning of mystery is: That which we know also and yet we cannot know. That which we recognise and which yet remains unrecognised. Let us try to understand this by an example.

You love a person and you have spent fifty years with him. Can you say that you know him? You are very well acquainted with him. If in 50 years' time you are not familiar with him, when will you be? You are well acquainted with him. You seem to know everything about him. Yet can you say, you

know every nook and corner of his personality? You are well aware of his habits and disposition; yet can you say he is predictable? Can you tell exactly what he will do tomorrow morning? No, the unpredictable element is present within him. That is the mystery – this 'unpredictable' about which we can make no forecasts. This is what makes the thing we know, yet unknown. Let us see from another angle:

Someone asks St. Augustine, "What is Time?" He replies, "As long as no one asks, I know very well what Time is but when someone asks, there is a lot of confusion." You too know what Time is. You know very well. You get up on time – how could you if you had no knowledge of Time? You go home on time. If you did not, how will you reach home in time? How will you have known it is time to go home? You know very well what Time is. But Augustine is right when he says he knows as long as no one asks but as soon as someone asks, everything is lost. Not the brightest of geniuses has up to now been able to answer this question, whereas the most ignorant of persons also makes use of Time. The most foolish simpleton is living within Time and yet the wisest are unable to define it.

Leave this aside, Time is a difficult matter. Life is not at all intricate. We all live. In fact we have lived enough. Those who know say, we have lived thousands of lives. Be that as it may, let us consider our present life. Say we have lived 20, 40, 50 years of this life. We know life for this period of Time. Yet if someone asks, "What is life?" we are stumped! What is the reason? When we have lived our lives for a number of years, we should know what life is and be able to tell.

Lao Tzu says, "It is this very thing what we call 'The Mystery'." We know and yet we do not know. We know everything and yet find that everything is unknown. Existence is present all around us, within, without, in every pore of our being, in every breath – yet it is unknown. What have you known?

The waves have lapped the shores of the ocean since time immemorial, yet they know nothing of the shore; nor do the shores know anything about the waves. Leave aside the waves, you yourself will know nothing more of the shores than the waves even if you walked them a thousand years! What do we really know? There is only a superficial acquaintance and this cursory acquaintance, we call knowledge.

To know this shallow acquaintance as knowledge causes many illusions, which deprive us of the knowledge of the Mystery. Lao Tzu says, "Do not call this superficial acquaintance, knowledge. Rather know it as cursory information. Then you will experience the presence of the Mystery all around you, every minute of the hour. The Mystery is; and no matter how much we know, it is limitless."

Now Science has also become a little profound and deep. It has cast off its childishness. It is not long since Science came into being, whereas there are relics of Religion, that are 20,000 years old. So if religion has said 5,000 years ago that life is a mystery, it is after the experience of 15,000 years. Science is only 300 years old and so comparatively, a mere child. One thing is certain: When Science becomes 15,000 years old, it too will say with just as much emphasis that life is a mystery.

15,000 years is a very long time. Now take the example of Einstein. He was a very great genius of our time in the field of Science. This man when he died made a very revealing statement. He said, "In my youth I thought Truth can be known. Now I think otherwise; now I think, Truth is unknowable and will always remain unknowable." It is certain that man will come to know a great deal, yet there

will be still as much that will remain unknown. Our knowing will make no difference. It will be just like our collecting a handful of water from the ocean. Perhaps a handful of water may diminish the ocean-water by that much, but in the Ocean of Existence, that is all around us, no amount of knowing will make even a fraction of a difference.

That which Religion calls, 'The Mystery', always remains to be known. It remains always unknown, unfamiliar. It is forever present in the same quantity.

To understand the meaning of RAHASYA (Mystery) you have to know three things. There is one – Ignorance or lack of knowledge. Ignorance is not mystery. Science believes that mystery is the outcome of ignorance. This is a mistake. Ignorance is not mystery. In ignorance we know nothing. Then how shall we have any knowledge of mystery? We shall have no knowledge of anything. The second is Knowledge. Even knowledge is not the mystery, for in knowledge we are aware of something. Rahasya (Mystery) is the happening beyond knowledge. Knowledge occurs beyond ignorance and the mystery occurs beyond knowledge, He who steps into knowledge from ignorance becomes wise and he who goes beyond knowledge and knows, becomes a mystic.

Know these three steps :. The first step is that of ignorance, the second step is knowledge. From the world of no-knowing, the world of knowing starts. If you stagnate at the step of not-knowing, you will remain ignorant. If you stagnate likewise, at the step of knowing you will remain simply a man of knowledge. But if you go still further, the world of mystery begins. Then in that state, having full knowledge, you will still have a complete knowledge of ignorance. Knowledge and ignorance, become one in Rahasya (Mystery).

So Lao Tzu says, "Within both these sides there is the One." He experiences Rahasya, who experiences the One both in knowledge and in ignorance and who Knows that there is not much difference between the wise and the ignorant. The ignorant suffer from the illusion that they know nothing, while the wise suffer from the illusion that they know everything. The mystic knows that there is no possibility of knowing. The mystic does not say, "Do not search to know." He says, "Strive your best to know." Know! Go so deep within knowing that you go beyond it. Then this knowing will not be a limitation or a bondage. You have risen above ignorance, now rise above knowledge.

The Ishavasya Rishi says: "The ignorant do go astray in darkness but what can we say of those knowledgeable ones, who are wandering in pitch-darkness?" Which wise man can this be? We have always been told that the ignorant go astray and never the wise! Then what does this Rishi of Ishavasya say? It is definite he knows what Lao Tzu knows. He says, "The ignorant goes astray for he does not know but the wise go astray for they think they know. And remember," the Rishi says, "the ignorant wander in darkness but the pseudo-wise wander in utter darkness." He who knows he does not know has a sort of humility within him but he who is confident he knows, loses all humility. His ego becomes strong and intense.

Mystery is the transcendence of both Ignorance and Knowledge.

Rahasya, is knowledge of the fact – know and yet you will never know. Strive hard to know but you will fail. Strive, search, discover but in the end you will only discover that life is a bottomless mystery. Its base is forever unknown. The One that is the actuality within both, is what we call 'the Mystery'. That which is the same in birth and death, that which is the same in light and darkness, we call Rahasya.

Now the line that follows is very wonderful.

This very conglomeration of names we call Rahasya. Where the density of the Mystery is highest, there lies the subtle and wonderful opening to its entrance. Where the density of the mystery is highest – density of Rahasya! What can this mean? We shall have to go back.

The ignorant is aware of the fact that he does not know. His ego is small, weak but it still is, for it knows that 'I do not know'. The learned one knows that 'I know.' The 'I' is strong, solid. The ignorant man has a feeling of the mystery because of his ignorance. He sees many wonders. Many things appear queer and mysterious to him for he does not understand anything.

When lightning flashes in the sky, he thinks perhaps Indra is angry. When it rains, he thinks the Gods are pleased with the world. When the harvest is ready, he thinks it to be the reward of his past good actions. If the harvest is poor or if there is an earthquake, he takes it to be the fruit of his sins. He thus makes his own calculations. The element of mystery is present though, conditioned by his ignorance and less experienced. But ignorance quickly gives its own interpretations of Rahasya. The lightning becomes Indra, the rains become the reward of good actions and then happiness, pain, justice, actions, each become a doctrine in itself. So the ignorant cooks up some theories of his own and his ego strengthens in proportion to his interpretations.

The man of knowledge knows the facts. The more he knows the stronger his 'I' becomes. As the 'I' gets stronger, so the attitude of Rahasya becomes more and more rare, its intensity fades.

In the third step, where the wise man is neither wise nor ignorant, when he knows and yet knows that he does not know, the 'I' drops completely. And when the ego is lost, the mystery deepens. So these two things are there: the ego and the mystery. When the ego is dense the Rahasya is thin, when the ego is small, the Rahasya is more emphasized. If the ego is accentuated fully, Rahasya disappears completely. When the Ego is silenced completely, and is absolutely zero, the Rahasya appears in its full intensity and strength.

It is only at the centre of the Ego that it can be decided whether the Rahasya is rare or dense. Therefore, all mystics stress the annihilation of the ego. Drop the ego and you will know the mystery.

How does the 'I' (ego) hinder?

The ego blinds us and does not allow the mystery to be seen. The very meaning of Rahasya is, "My will is naught, my power is of no avail, by myself I can never know. I have no competence to know. I am helpless." When this feeling becomes intense, the knowledge of mystery dawns on us. This is why we find that children are always surrounded by this feeling of wonder and mystery, whereas elderly people are not. Children live in the world of mystery – why?

Their ego is as yet not very strong. Now when they see a butterfly flitting on the flowers, it seems like a beautiful dream. When they see a flower bloom, it feels as if the Infinite has opened its doors to them. When the sun comes out they feel bathed in the effulgence of the Supreme Light. When the waves lap the shores, the heart is thrilled and dances with joy. Now the pebbles on the road-side appear like jewels to them. The 'I' is not so strong yet, so the Rahasya appears all around. So a child's life passes entirely in fantasy – its life is like a poem.

Therefore little children cannot differentiate between dreaming and waking. A child is quite likely to get up in the morning crying for the doll that was lost in his dream. However hard we may try, it is hard to convince him that it was a dream. This is because there is no clear-cut line of demarcation between sleeping and waking in the consciousness of the child. The child as yet, dreams in the day. As yet the only difference between day and night is the difference of closing and opening of the eyes. Everything within the child is as yet fluid; the feeling of wonder and mystery is as yet very intense.

Then as the ego strengthens, the mystery begins to fade. As the child grows, is educated and begins to stand on his own feet, as he begins to display his own capabilities, the 'I' is strengthened and stands out clear and the mystery lessens and fades in the same proportion.

The mystery that surrounds the child, is the mystery of ignorance. The mystery that surrounds the saint, is the mystery of knowledge. Before knowledge, there is the mystery of ignorance and after knowledge, is the mystery that is not of ignorance.

This is the difference between a poet and a Rishi (sage).

The poet lives in Rahasya but it is born out of ignorance. The sage also lives in poetry – but in the poetry that is beyond Knowledge. The meaning of Rishi, is also – a poet, – but he is a poet who has eyes, who has seen. The Rishi lives in poetry. The world is a poem to him and not prose. The world is not a dry and brittle composition for him. To him the world is bound in song and verse and filled with music and dance. But the Rishi is one who has become a poet after attaining Knowledge. This is the difference between the two. This is why we cannot call the Rishis of the Upanishads as mere poets, though their poems are unsurpassed; and our poets as Rishis, for their work is born out of the wonder of ignorance.

Our poet is a child that has never grown up! He grows in body but in whom there is no dividing line between his dreams within and the world without. He is a mere child and therefore it is not strange when he acts like one. That is why a poet appears immature in his dealings. Many a time we cannot understand them and so their behaviour appears immoral at times.

Now Picasso loves a woman. He loves her madly. Very few can love as Picasso loved. Then one day this love flew away. Then he began to love another woman in the same fashion. Everywhere he was scandalized for his immoral behaviour. The simple reason was, Picasso was absolutely childish, – just as a child loves a rag-doll and holds it to his heart night and day and then one day he is fed up so he throws it into a corner and never looks at it again. We never call the child immoral for we know he is only a child but Picasso would be maligned for his behaviour. We might accuse him of faithlessness whereas that is not the case. When he loved, he loved as passionately as the child loves his doll. He did not let go of her night and day. So intense was his love. But now it is gone! Just as the child forgets the doll, he forgets this woman and is now preoccupied with another. This is bound to look unethical in the eyes of the world.

The fact is, the immorality that is evident in the lives of musicians, poets and painters is due to the fact that though they grow in body, their minds remain immature and childlike. Deep within they are still children. This is the reason why they can write poems but for this very reason their actual lives are so disturbed and chaotic. Therefore they can paint a beautiful picture but their lives become

veritably ugly; they can compose beautiful songs but are crude in themselves as far as their own lives are concerned.

A Rishi is a different personality altogether. His childhood is the childhood re-attained. It is a childhood regained – and this is not immaturity or childishness. This is the simplicity and innocence attained after complete knowledge and perfect maturity. Therefore we see child-like behaviour in Saints also. But there is no non-ethical behaviour in a saint. The Saint has the innocence and guilelessness of a child but not the undisciplined impertinence of the poet. In his innocence, in his supreme freedom, there is a law, a regulation, a discipline. In his spontaneity also, there is an intrinsic discipline. Behind all this child-like actions runs the stream of the Prime Experience. And yet, he is outside of knowledge and experience. And yet, he is above knowledge.

Lao Tzu says, "This is what we call the perfect mystery." If this mystery deepens and becomes more intense, it opens the magic doors of life. It becomes dense only in proportion to the extinction of the ego. We can say: 100 per cent ego = 0 per cent Rahasya; 90 per cent Ego = 10 per cent Rahasya; 0 per cent ego = 100 per cent Rahasya. The energy the power, is one and the same in both. The same energy resides in the ego as in the Rahasya, so when the ego lets go a certain proportion of the energy, it quickly enters the Rahasya.

The Life-Energy has two optional directions: Pride and wonder; 'I' and 'You'. The 'You' here, is God, the mystery. If the 'I' becomes stronger, the 'you' becomes weaker to that extent.

Our Age has denied God for no reason.

Our century is the most egoistic age. And the most interesting fact is, that the ego is born out of knowledge. Our century is the most intellectual century. This might seem contradictory but if you have followed what I said before, you will be able to understand. The knowledge attained in our century, is the highest ever attained by the world. As a result, it is the most egoistic century. Therefore, it follows, that it is completely devoid of Rahasya. The more our knowledge increases, the more our libraries swell and the more our universities become the trustees of knowledge. The more intelligent our children become, the more will the Mystery fade away. Then a moment may come, which will be the most suicidal moment for man. When a culture becomes so filled with knowledge that no secret of the mystery remains, then there is no other remedy save death.

Why?

Because we can live only with wonder, not with ego. We, the so-called egoists also live in Rahasya alone. It is impossible to live with complete ego; only death is possible; suicide is possible. If we come to know that we know all, then nothing is left to be known except death!

This is why as we look back in time, we find man more filled with savour towards life. There were less suicides in days gone by. It is interesting to note that uneducated societies do not commit suicide. An intense ego is required for suicide which they do not possess. A very dense and solid 'I' is required to die – an ego so strong that it denies all the mystery of life and enters into self destruction. A very strong quality of conceit is required to end one's life. That is why the older the society, the less educated and primeval, there is almost no incidence of suicide. The adivasis do not know of self-destruction. They are unfamiliar with it, they can never think of it.

There are many languages even today in the world, in which there is no word like suicide, because those people could think of no reason why a man should take his own life. But for us, conditions have changed.

Albert Camus has written a book, in the very beginning of which he says: ”The only philosophical problem is suicide”. That a philosopher should start a book thus and that too a philosopher of the calibre of Albert Camus who is considered among the world’s wisest men today! He has not discussed God at all in his book. God is not the subject of philosophy. He has discussed only suicide which he considers the basic problem of philosophy. If man has to live, what for should he live? His question is plausible. If there is no mystery, what is the cause for life? Do we live to eat? Do we live to dwell in the houses? Do we live to produce children? And for what should the children live? Is it for producing more children? What is the purpose of all this? We build houses. roads, aeroplanes – but why?

If you say you live for love then you enter the world of mystery. Camus will say. ”Where is love? I searched everywhere and I found nothing but sexual-desire.” Love is a mystery sex is a fact. If you try to catch hold of it, you will be able to lay your hands on sex but not on love. If someone says one should live for joy, then bliss also is a mystery. The realities, the facts, are the so-called happiness and non-happiness; and behind each happiness, hides unhappiness. So Camus asks, ”What for should we live?” He is right – we have seen happiness, experienced it once!

Nasruddin was sitting in the tea-house. A man came up to him and asked news of his village. He is a stranger. Nasruddin asks him: ”Do you play cards? If you do, I shall be pleased to play a game with you.” The stranger replied, ”No, I played once and found it to be a useless pass-time.” ”Do you play chess? Let us have a game of chess,” said Nasruddin. ”No,” said the stranger, ”I played it once and found it very boring.” ”Then how shall I entertain you?” asked Nasruddin. ”Do you like music? Shall I play a tune?” ”No!” exclaimed the man, ”I heard it once and I did not like it.” ”Then would you care to go fishing?” Offered Nasruddin and to his disappointment the stranger replied, ”I will not go but you can take my son.”

Nasruddin says: ”Forgive my impertinence but he must be your only son? Like everything else you must have experienced love and sex just once and no more, for you must have found it useless too!”

There is in fact, no reality of life which is worth a second look. If something is worth seeing again, it cannot be a fact, it must be a mystery. It must be something that has to be known over and over again and still remains a mystery. There is no question of knowing again a thing that is already known. It is only when a thing is not known in its entirety that we try again and again and yet again and inspite of knowing it a thousand times, the urge to know it remains a thousand-fold, because the unknown, the unfamiliar still remains to be known.

Camus is right when he says if there is no other problem left then suicide is the only philosophical problem. Knowledge is utmost in our age and therefore there are bound to be the highest number of suicides. It is filled to the brim with ego, therefore it says, ”There is no God, there is no religion, there is no mystery.”

Lao Tzu says, ”He who attenuates his ego and intensifies Rahasya, for him are open the subtle and wonderful gates of life.” These two words: Subtle and wonderful, are to be understood properly.

What we understand by 'subtle', is not the meaning that people like Lao Tzu take. When we say subtle, we mean less gross, less massive. We say, the wall is massive, solid and air is subtle but air also is solid – it is less solid. The difference between a wall and air is not very much for there is a quantitative difference and not a qualitative distinction.

A Wall of air can be created and you can be thrown down from it with a greater force then any ordinary wall. There are chances of your survival in case of the ordinary wall, but not so in case of the atmospheric wall. Air has weight as much as the wall, and it is even more. We do not feel the weight of air as its pressure is distributed equally all over our body. There is otherwise, the pressure of thousands of pounds of air on us. If this pressure is distributed in any other way, we would die of the weight of atmosphere. When there is a strong wind, you feel it is the wind behind you that pushes you in front. It is not so. The wind behind pushes the air before you, thus creating a vacuum which makes you fall. The atmosphere has its own solid form.

What things do we call subtle or rare? All that we call subtle is a transformation of the solid.

When people like Lao Tzu make use of the term 'subtle', they mean that which is well beyond the grasp of the five senses. It is important and necessary that you understand the right meaning of the word 'subtle'. The eyes do not see the air but the hands feel it. So it is within the grasp of our senses and hence not subtle. Subtle means: that which is beyond the grasp of the sense-organs. Have you known anything you have seen with your eyes, if you have heard anything it is through your ears, if you have smelt anything it is through the nose, if you have touched, it is always with your hands. There is no experience of the subtle in all your experiences.

We can give it this definition: What can be known by the sense organs, is gross, what cannot be known through the sense-organs and can still be known, is subtle. This way you can understand otherwise our measure of distinction is the faculties of perception only.

We hear a loud noise, we say it is gross. When the sound is very thin and low, we say it is subtle. Actually there is no difference in the sound. It is the different variation of the same sound – and both are caught by the ear. If these sound-waves are not caught by the ear but caught by the radio, even then they are not subtle. They are gross. It only means, that a more sensitive ear (radio) has caught it.

Now there are pictures passing over here that only the television can grasp and not our eyes. But even these are not subtle for the television is a very gross thing – only its eyes sharper than ours. The ears of the radio have a keener sense of hearing than our ears. There is only the difference of magnitude, quantity. Therefore all that can be grasped by the faculty of senses, is gross. I wish to add something more to this definition, which the Rishis of yore did not, for they did not know and that is: "Whatever is grasped by the senses and whatever is grasped by the mechanisms invented by the senses is all gross." The instruments invented by the senses both in past and in future, will never be capable of catching the subtle.

The instruments created by the senses are merely the extensions of the senses and nothing more. What are binoculars? It is an extension of our eyes. What is the radar? It is an extension of our eyes. What is the gun? – an extension of our hands. Where we threw stones previously with our hands, the gun helps to throw bullets at a greater distance. So it is nothing more than an extension

of the hand. We are occupied in extending our senses. What are the knives and the swords? They are our nails – extended. The wild animals use their nails to kill their prey, we make use of iron-nails. Whatever comes within the grasp of the extensions of our senses, is all gross.

Subtle is that which never comes within the grasp of the senses and can yet be grasped. Remember, if it cannot be grasped, you will never be aware of it. Therefore, it is necessary to understand one more thing: Come within your grasp it must but not through any faculty of the senses. There should be an immediate grasp, there should be no mediator. If I can see you without the eyes, hear you without the ears. if I touch you without the use of my hands, – then this is subtle. There is nothing in-between then – neither my hand nor any instrument – no mediator. If my consciousness gets a direct experience, that is a subtle experience.

So Lao Tzu says: ”He whose knowledge of Rahasya becomes intense, opens the door to the subtle.” When the feeling of Rahasya reaches its peak, the ego falls. Then we have no use for the faculty of senses. Really speaking, Ego is that which works through the senses. If the ego falls, the senses become useless. Then the non-sensory experiences begin; and these are known as the subtle experiences. You also get a glimpse of such experiences at times.

In some moments at certain times, in certain conditions your ego melts and then you get a sudden glimpse of such experiences. But the ego condenses again and the experience is lost. Then no matter how hard you try, you can never understand it. The ego cannot understand such an experience.

You have heard sounds that you have yourself turned down later as false. You yourself will have said: ”No, no, I could not have heard. How could I? There was nobody?” You have seen such forms at times that you turn down later as hallucinations. Many a time you come suddenly to the brink of such possibilities which later you yourself cannot believe! When the experience is gone and the ego is once again strengthened, it refuses to believe in the validity of such experiences for they are beyond its grasp. It cannot conceive of any experience minus the senses.

There is a friend of mine. His father died. The day his father died, this poet friend had set out for another town by the evening bus. When he left, at about 6 P.M., to take part in a gathering of poets, his father was hale and hearty. In the bus he sat, lost in his poetry and when someone loses himself in his art, his ego begins to melt and he becomes like a child. Then he enters his old world of childhood again. He flirts with the butterflies, laughs with the flowers and Sings with the birds. He drops into this world of fantasy and talks with the brooks and converses with the trees. Then messages flash in the clouds above – for the ego has almost faded.

So this friend was drowned in his world of poetry. Then suddenly at about 9 P.M. he felt a terrible fit of depression that was beyond his understanding. All this time, he was filled with joy, he was happy, songs were pouring out of him. What had happened? Wherever he turned, he saw clouds of despair and sorrow and there was no earthly reason to explain. This made him all the more restless. The strain of music snapped within him and he was engulfed in anxiety and gloom. For three hours, till he reached the town, he was in this condition. He went to his room and tried to sleep but he could not.

At 2 o’clock in the night he heard a knock on the door. Someone called: ”Munna!” He was startled for none except his father addressed him thus!

He opened the door and looked out. There was no one. There was no question of his father being there. No other man called him by that name. He again opened the door, the wind rushed in. The night was dark and there was no one about. Everyone in the hotel was fast asleep, there was absolute stillness all around. The street below was empty. He was on the 2nd floor, no one could come accidentally. He closed the door and thought perhaps he was dreaming.

He went to sleep. After five minutes or so, he heard the same knock and the same voice calling out to him! It was even more clear now! And this time he himself was awake. The voice was so familiar, it could be nobody's but his father's. Again he opened the door but there was no one. Once again the cold wind rushed in. Now he could not sleep. He became restless. At 3 A.M. he went down and rang up his house. He was told his father died. Exactly at 2 A.M. he breathed his last and exactly at 2 A.M. the first knock and the call of 'Munna!'

But my friend does not yet believe. He still thinks it was an illusion of the mind. He is an intelligent person and he still thinks over it. To this day he says that the incident took place but he still does not believe it was his father's voice. It must be a mistake, he feels. It may be a play of his own mind, some coincidence that his father did at 2 A.M. in the night and he may have thought of him just then!

So the subtle peeps into our lives at times. And because we do not understand, we brush aside these experiences as hallucinations. But when the Rahasya intensifies, then the subtle does not only peep; rather, we are deceived in the subtle. Then we live in the subtle. Then the subtle begins to happen all around us for all the twenty-four hours.

Lao Tzu says: "The door of the subtle opens and of the wonderful and the miraculous!" What is the miraculous? – Let us understand. Ordinarily, what we look upon as miraculous is also something. We call a happening a miracle, for we do not understand how it happens. When do you say it is a miracle?

A man dies. Jesus puts his hand on his head. The man comes back to life. We call this a miracle – why? A man is ill, he bows at the feet of somebody and he is cured! We call it a miracle – why? Buddha passes under a tree that is dry. Suddenly it sprouts into bloom! We say this is a miracle – why? What is the reason for calling it a miracle?

There is only one reason. Ordinarily we understand, that happening which takes place outside the precincts of cause and causality is a miracle. Normally, all trees give new off-shoots but then, there is always a time, a regulation. There is a reason why they sprout into new buds. But a tree that is dry since years and which had no cause to bloom, suddenly breaks into new leaves when Buddha passes under it. Now there is no connection between the two happenings – Buddha's passing and the tree blossoming. What connection can there be between the two happenings? A man is dead. If he becomes alright with treatment, we say perhaps the heart's pace had slowed down and with the medicine it is restored. Then it is no miracle to us. Why – because the medicine is the cause and his becoming well is the causality.

But if you bow your head at the feet of a person and become well, there is no causality. Then it is a miracle. Miracle means – where the rule of cause and causality does not apply. Where you cannot find the cause and the causality. Jesus places his hand on the head of a corpse and it springs to life there is no connection between the two. What is there in Jesus's hand? But if the man has become alive then it is a miracle.

Generally what we understand as miracle. is that happening. the cause and causality of which we do not understand.

But there also, there can be cause and causality. There is. Therefore that which we look upon today as a miracle, science might prove some day that it is not a miracle. It is only a matter of finding cause and causality. As soon as these are discovered. the miracle is lost. If a man comes and bows at my feet and gets well, it is not miracle – but it looks so because we cannot find the relationship between the cause and causality.

It is possible that that man does not really suffer from any illness. He may just be suffering from a mental delusion. If he in all reverence and faith, bows at my feet then the faith which had strengthened the illness will melt before this faith of his and it will be destroyed. It will seem a miracle but is not so for cause and causality are behind it. The illness was created by his own faith and destroyed by his own. My feet had nothing to do with it they can do nothing. It is not at all a miracle.

If a dead man comes to life, even then it is no miracle. Some day in the near future we shall unfold the mystery of his death and coming back to life. If illness can be mental, cannot death also be mental? It is absolutely possible. Death can be mental. Not all die of a physical illness, intellectuals die often of mental illness.

If you are thoroughly convinced that you are dying, you are dying, then you will die. Your physical mechanism is absolutely alright and can still work. Only your consciousness within has contracted. The hand of Jesus can loosen the contraction of the consciousness. It is not a miracle. The magnetic power of the hand of Jesus can bring up the buried consciousness to the surface once again.

This living magnetism of the body has its own science. It has its own cause and causality. Then it is possible that bowing at someone's feet even without faith may prove beneficial. Then it is possible that the living magnetism of this man, enters your body. Just as electricity enters the body by a mere touch and gives a shock, so also the magnetic principle enters and changes the other person. So it is not a miracle when the cause and causality can be traced.

The miracle Lao Tzu talks about, is something quite different. That miracle is there where the ego is zero – a complete naught. When the ego is completely destroyed, a rare phenomenon takes place and that is we see no difference between the cause and the causality. Then the causality becomes the cause as the cause becomes the causality. The seed becomes the tree and the tree becomes the seed. And in that state a man can see the seed and the tree simultaneously. But then this is a real miracle! Try to understand this. It is rather involved and intricate.

We look at the seed but at the same time we cannot see the tree. We shall have to wait twenty years to see the tree. Then we will see the tree but then, the seed will no longer be. We see a babe being born, we do not see the old man in him. We shall have to wait, 70 years to see the old man and by the time we see the old man, the child will have long disappeared. We shall never be able to see them both together. That Lao Tzu calls a miracle when the ego is reduced to naught and the mystery becomes intensely deep. Then the old man becomes visible in the babe and death in birth. The whole tree becomes visible in the seed, together with all the flowers that are yet to bloom. Then we see all that happening which is yet to happen. What has already happened, also seems to be

present and what is still to happen, is also present. The Past and the Future are finished and only 'the Moment' remains. All existence stands in the eternity of one moment.

And when Krishna tells Arjuna: "These whom you think you are going to kill, I see them dead already. They are dead Arjuna, they only seem standing before you, for you do not have the power to see in to the future." This is a miracle! Miracle means – where the cause and causality are not apart.

They are not apart actually. It is our manner of looking that is wrong. The way we see things is like this. If I were to make a hole in the wall and look into this room then when I look at say A, I will see A only, then when I turn towards B, I shall see B only. A will be lost. From B when I turn to C, B will be lost. Then supposing there is no way of turning my back, what would I understand by this? I will naturally think that A and B are finished and only C remains. I cannot see D further ahead. Now if the wall were to break, I would see all A,B,C,D simultaneously. Then this would be a miracle.

If I can see the birth of creation and its death, its annihilation simultaneously, it is a miracle.

Lao Tzu says when a person enters into Rahasya with all intensity, he finds the door of the subtle and finally the door to wonder and miracles open. Then he sees the world coming into being and ending at the same time. Then he sees God making and destroying the world simultaneously. This is rather difficult to understand – it cannot be brought within our understanding and hence it is a miracle. What we generally call miracles have nothing to do with this miracle, for these can be searched and discovered but as long as the cause and causality bear no connection, it remains a mystery, a miracle to us.

In the authentic miracle also, the cause and causality are not known, as the cause and causality are both present.

A very perplexing happening took place recently in the research institute of Oxford University, which will make it easier to understand the element of miracles. Some scientists were taking the picture of a bud. When they developed the film, they found it was the picture of a flower! The film used was the most sensitive film available today. Before the camera was the bud, but within, the picture was that of a flower! The picture was conserved all the same. There may have been some mistake somewhere – the film could have been previously exposed, some ray might have entered unknown. They attributed it to the chemicals or some such thing. When the bud turned into a flower, another picture was taken and this was an exact replica of the first picture! This experiment could not be repeated. However the Scientist who had carried out the experiment is fully confident that some day we shall develop such a sensitive film that when a child is born, we can photograph the old man within him. For that which is to happen, has already happened in the world of the subtle. The process of what is to happen tomorrow has already started in the World of the subtle and it must have already taken place in some deeper world. It only takes time for the news to reach us. As long as the sense faculties try to grasp it, there will be delay. If we can grasp without the help of our senses, we shall be able to grasp here and now.

The time-gap between a bud and a flower is not gap between the bud and flower but the gap between the flower and our senses. If our senses were to step aside, we shall be able to behold the flower in the bud. Then the miracle will have taken place. To enter into this world of miracles, is the aim of Religion.

Lao Tzu has said a great deal in few words. But this is a code. If it is merely read, you will gain nothing. But if you unfold every word and lay bare each layer, perhaps you shall touch – though every so slightly – the spirit of Lao Tzu.

Enough for today, we shall talk again tomorrow.

CHAPTER 5

Free from the similar variances – the beautiful and the good

23 June 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 2: SUTRA 1

THE RISE OF RELATIVE OPPOSITES.

WHEN THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH ALL KNOW BEAUTY AS BEAUTY, THERE ARISES (THE RECOGNITION OF) UGLINESS. WHEN THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH ALL KNOW THE GOOD AS GOOD, THERE ARISES (THE RECOGNITION OF) EVIL.

The acquaintance of beauty, the experience of beauty, is a forerunner of our familiarity with ugliness. Good cannot be experienced without the knowledge of evil.

Lao Tzu reiterates what he has said in the first chapter but in a different dimension. He says: ”He who experiences the beautiful cannot do so without having experienced the ugly.” A person can experience beauty to the same extent as he experiences ugliness. In fact, if a person has no knowledge of ugliness he has no knowledge of beauty also. He who tries to be good has very much the evil present within him. A man cannot desire to be good if he is initially not evil.

According to Lao Tzu – and what he says is very significant – ”SINCE THE DAY MAN HAS KNOWN WHAT BEAUTY IS, THE NATURAL BEAUTY WHERE UGLINESS WAS ABSENT, WAS LOST AND SINCE THE DAY MAN HAS KNOWN WHAT GOOD IS, THE NATURAL STATE OF GOODNESS WAS LOST WHEN PEOPLE WERE NOT AWARE OF EVIL.” Let us understand it this way.

If we look back into the ancient, the mythological state of man, when he was in the quiet, artless and natural state of being, we find no knowledge of beauty but at the same time there is no knowledge

of ugliness also. There we will not find incorruptible people, for dishonesty was not possible. There it was impossible to detect a sinner for there were no virtuous people.

What Lao Tzu is trying to explain in this Sutra is that our lives have always been formed with dualities. If a community becomes too eager to become honest it shows that its members have become very corrupt. If parents teach their children that to speak the truth is a virtue, it shows that the natural truthfulness is absent in the society and untruthfulness has become the order of the day. Lao Tzu says, "We always stress that, the opposite of which is already present." If we tell our children "Do not tell lies", it proves that untruthfulness is predominantly prevalent. If we tell them to be honest it means that dishonesty has become firmly rooted within us.

There is an account of a meeting between Lao Tzu and Confucius. Confucius was the greatest moral thinker on earth – moral thinker and not religious thinker. He is from among those who have been pre-occupied with the problems of how to make man good. When he heard that Lao Tzu was very religious man, it was but natural that he was eager to meet him. He requested Lao Tzu to advise people to be good and honest that they should not steal and they should refrain from the urge to steal, that they should shun anger and be forgiving, and how violence can be destroyed and non-violence can be established.

Seated outside his hut, Lao Tzu replied: "How can man be good unless there is evil? When there is evil, then alone can man be good. I always advise people how not to be evil, I do not worry about virtue and goodness. I visualise a state in which goodness also is not detected and it is impossible to tell who is good?"

Confucius could not understand, "Man has to be taught to be honest for he is dishonest," he repeated. Lao Tzu replied, "Dishonesty increased from the day you began talking of honesty. I look forward to the day when people no longer talk of dishonesty." Confucius still could not understand him. This sutra is difficult for any moral thinker to follow, for he thinks good and evil to be two different and opposite qualities and that one has to destroy the evil and preserve the good. Whereas Lao Tzu maintains that good and evil are the two aspects of the same thing. It is not possible to destroy one in favour of the other. If you discard one, you will have to drop the other. They both have to be dropped together. If you save one, the other is automatically preserved. If you wish to keep the good, the evil remains in the back-ground, for good cannot exist without evil. If you wish to respect the honest man, you can only do so if there are dishonest people.

This is something worth pondering upon: If there are no dishonest people in the world, would we ever think of honouring the honest person? Would there be respect for a saint if there were no sinners? This means if we want to respect the saint, the sinners should be very much present, and it is one of the mysteries of life that the saint always speaks against the sinner! He little knows that the recognition he gets is only on account of the reprobates. The saint will be lost in the absence of the sinners; his existence can only be around and on account of the sinners.

Lao Tzu says, "Religion existed in the world when there was no sign of the saint." His words are very profound. He says there was Religion on earth when virtue was unknown, when goodness was not heard about, when no sermons were given in favour of truth, when no one exhorted people against violence. When non-violence is installed as virtue and Truth is acclaimed as Religion, the opposite attributes come into being-in their full magnitude.

Lao Tzu told Confucius: "All you good people of the world relax and be peaceful. Stop all talks of goodness and you will find that if you are strong enough to let go of goodness also, evil will fall of itself. Confucius could not understand him. No moral thinker understands Lao Tzu, for he thinks this would make things worse. As it is, he feels he somehow with great effort and persuasion, manages to preserve virtue. Lao Tzu says, "When you try to save goodness, the evil is preserved automatically." These two are connected. It is impossible to keep any one of the two. Either both will remain or none.

Lao Tzu says: "The state of Religiousness is where neither exists." This state he used to call "The Simple (Unrestrained) Tao." This he used to call the realm of Religion, of Nature. If a man is completely established within his nature, there is no good and no evil. There is no valuation there, no censure, no praise, no beauty nor ugliness. There, things are as they are.

Therefore it invariably happens that when a person is filled with the feeling of beauty, ugliness torments him within to the same extent. The sense of feeling in case of both, starts at the same time. If I say: "To be such is beautiful," then everything contrary to this, becomes ugly. The slightest decision on one side results in an equal decision in the alternative. Therefore Lao Tzu says, "WHEN THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH KNOW BEAUTY AS BEAUTY THERE ARISES THE RECOGNITION OF UGLINESS. WHEN THE PEOPLE OF EARTH KNOW THE GOOD AS GOOD THERE ARISES THE RECOGNITION OF EVIL."

This is a very difficult sutra. It means that if we wish for beauty in the world it is not proper to recognise it as such. In fact no recognition is expedient for then the worth of ugliness has got to be taken into consideration.

If someone asks you, "What is beauty?" Your answer invariably will be – "That which is not ugly." Beauty cannot be recognised without ugliness. Similarly the sinner has got to be brought within the definition of the saint, just as much as ugliness is necessary to form the boundaries for realizing beauty.

So Lao Tzu says: "When beauty is not recognised as beauty it is very much there but is not labelled as such. When beauty exists without a name, then ugliness cannot come into being. Similarly when the good is not labelled good, when it is not venerated as good, when it is not even recognised as good, there is no way for evil to exist." There is a Good outside of duality, there is a Beauty outside of duality. But this good cannot be called by that name, nor can that beauty be known as Beauty, for there is no way of expressing these. To be silent, is the only way to express them.

Lao Tzu says to Confucius: "Go Back! Your moral thinkers are the ones who have deformed the world. You are the mischief-makers! Go and be merciful enough not to worry about the morals of man! The more you try to make him good the more evil he becomes."

When the father tells the son for the first time that to tell the truth is to be religious, in all probability, the son has no idea what is truth and what is untruth. When he tells him for the first time that to lie is a sin, he in all probability has no idea of falsehood; And the very advice of the father that 'to lie is a sin', is the cause of the son's initial attraction towards false-hood. If the son has lied before this, he has not done it knowingly. He has no acquired knowledge of false-hood that can draw a line of sin within his mind. But now the distinction starts, now he will differentiate between a truth and a lie.

As his knowledge of truth and false-hood increases, the simplicity of his consciousness is destroyed and duality is born. But we go about creating dualities all around us and think nothing about it. We think it is for our good that we do so.

Lao Tzu was a great revolutionary from this point of view. He says: "This is the evil. Whenever we give birth to evil it is with the excuse of the good." Actually, evil is never born directly. Whenever an evil is born. it is with the excuse of some good. We are always out to create the good when we create the evil.

There is the adivasi – a primeval man. He lives in the jungles. He has no knowledge of beauty as we have, nor that of ugliness. He has no distinction of any sort. He is capable of love without bringing in either beauty or ugliness. He is capable of loving that which we look upon as ugly. He is capable of loving that also, which we look upon as beautiful. His love makes no boundaries. He is able to love all. The idea of beauty and ugliness, has not developed within him. It is we, who develop these ideas. We separate the beautiful and the ugly. And then, a very interesting happening takes place. We find that we are unable even to love the beautiful, while the primitive man, without any conceptions, is capable of loving even what we call 'the ugly!' We think we will be able to love the beautiful, so we separate the grotesque from the beautiful. Then we find, we are not able to love the beautiful also! For the mind filled with dualities, is incapable of love.

The beautiful and the ugly, form a pair. What you look upon as beautiful, how long will it remain beautiful? It is a funny thing that what you call ugly, remains ugly forever but what you call beautiful does not remain beautiful after some time. Then what do you get? Have you ever thought on this? What you have branded as ugly, remains ugly forever. What you look upon as beautiful today, loses its beauty after a few days. Ultimately the mind ridden with duality is devoid of all beauty. There is nothing but ugliness filled in it.

There is this primeval mind that draws no distinction between beauty and ugliness and who is also able to love that which we look upon as ugly. And because he is capable of loving, everything becomes beautiful for him. Remember, we love only that which is beautiful. After a few days, the beauty melts, disappears. The unfamiliar attraction of beauty, its invitation, is lost. When this happens, where will our love stand?

The primitive man loves and he imparts beauty to whatever he loves. Understand the difference: We love the beautiful. The beauty is lost in a short time – where is the ground for our love to stand? The primitive man loves first and whatever he loves, he finds beauty therein. The special quality of love is: that if it is self-dependent, it increases day by day and if it depends upon the other, it grows less and less.

If I have loved you because you are beautiful, this love will lesser day by day but if I have loved you for love's sake, your beauty will grow day by day. If love stands on its own feet, it blossoms; if it seeks the support of the other, it is bound to become lame and fall. Yet, this is what we keep doing. Therefore we have to make use of the term beauty and ugliness. The primeval mind has no knowledge of these words.

The primeval mind is somewhat like this: a mother has two sons. One is called beautiful, the other is not but to the mother they are equally beautiful. To her, one is not beautiful and the other ugly.

They are both her sons and therefore they are beautiful. Their beauty emerges from the fact that they are her sons. Primarily, there is the mother's love, and from this love, their beauty shines. The primeval mind that Lao Tzu talks about is the mind that lives in natural simplicity, beyond the pair of opposites and their differences.

Thus Lao Tzu says: "Evil has got to be eradicated but as long as you try to save the good, you will not be able to destroy evil." The sinner has to be destroyed but as long as you hail the saint, the sinner is bound to remain. There is an intricate net-work within this also. The saint is also interested that there be sinners in the world, The more sinners there are, the greater will be the brightness of the saint, for he can criticize them, abuse them; he can start a movement to bring a change in them, he will labour to reform them – he will have some work to do.

But if there be a community on this earth in which there is no sinner, then those whose egos are fed and nourished in the name of saintliness, will at once become useless and impotent. They will have no place to stand. This may seem contradictory, but nonetheless true that the ego of a saint flourishes only when there is a collection of sinners around him. It is just as a wealthy man delights in his riches only when there is poverty all around him. A big palace give6 pleasure only when it is surrounded on all sides by impoverished tenements. The pleasure of the palace depends not on the palace itself but on the misery and pain in the hutments surrounding it. The pleasure of the saint is not in his saintliness, but in the strength the ego finds in the stark comparison with the unsaintly.

Lao Tzu says, "Leave both. We call that Religion where there is no good and no evil". Generally what is defined as Religion is absolutely different. You will say, "Religion means the good. "Lao Tzu says, "No". You will say Religion is that which is auspicious, Religion is Truth. But Lao Tzu will still say "no"; for where there is truth, there is also untruth, where there is auspiciousness there is also inauspiciousness. So Lao Tzu says, "Where both are not, where there is no duality, where the mind is devoid of duality and established in the indivisible One where there is not an inch of separation, there is Religion." So to Lao Tzu, Religion is transcendental – where there is neither darkness nor light.

If we were to tell Lao Tzu that God is Light, he will deny it. "Then what will happen to the darkness?" He will ask.

"Where will it go?" Then your God will forever be surrounded by darkness for light is always encircled by darkness.

Remember, light is always invested with darkness. Light cannot be without darkness. Light a small lamp and its brightness will be surrounded on all sides by an ocean of darkness. It is in the midst of darkness that light exists. Remove the darkness and the light will be gone immediately; it will be found nowhere. Lao Tzu will say, "No, God is not light. Ne is where both darkness and light are not; where dualism and duality are not."

The fundamental difference between moral thinking and religious thinking is this alone. Moral thinking splits life into two always. It scorns one and praises the other. That which it praises, it honours and encourages; that which it scorns, it insults and humbles. Have you ever considered what is the secret behind this strategy? What is the secret behind the whole of these moral scriptures? It is the Ego.

We say a thief is bad, he is low, despicable, worthy of despise. When we say this, we are telling the ego of people that if you are caught stealing you will lose your reputation, you will be insulted, you will become worthless; people will look down upon you. If you do not steal, you will be respected, people will felicitate you, garland you, respect you; you will win glory not only in this world but also in the next. If you do evil, you will rot in hell, in sin and sluggishness. What are we actually doing by this? We are hurting the bad man's ego and satisfying the good man's ego. We are teaching people that if you wish your ego to reach completion, be good. If you are bad, your ego will suffer.

The entire frame-work of Ethics stands on the ego. Now it is strange that it never occurs to us how moral scriptures can stand on the ego! What can be more immoral than the ego? But it is a fact that ego is at the base of all ethics. When Lao Tzu says this, he pulls down the entire frame-work of ethics. He says, "We do not accept good and evil, we do not accept sin and virtue. We desire that state of mind in which there is no idea of duality." But there is no existence of ego also. Religion is an ego-less state whereas ethics stand on the foundation of ego.

Our complete lives, all our preambles right from childhood to old age, revolve round the ego. We tell our children, "Stand first in your class if you do not want to be disgraced. Stand first, get good marks and you shall be honoured, otherwise you shall be rated low." Then this same play continues till old age. We tell our grown-ups that if they perform good deeds, their rating will be high and they shall attain heaven. If not, they will fall in the eyes of others and will go to hell. They shall gain no name either in this world or the next. Please note the stress is all on the name.

Ethics that are based on the Ego are therefore unable to be virtuous. As a result, immorality spreads to the very roots of the ethical establishment. Every clever person is anxious to display his virtuosity rather than be virtuous, for the real thing is to gain a name, to gain honour and pride. What will people say is all that matters.

If I am a thief but am not caught in the act, I am not called a thief. Ethics only stress that you should not be bad in the eyes of others, whether people call you evil or God calls you evil, makes no difference. If people call me bad, I feel insulted but if I steal and am not caught, then I steal and I save my ego also. Then where is the harm? So ethics ultimately prove to be a fraud only. Those who are clever and skilful, find clever ways of being immoral while making a show of virtuosity to the world. They appear what they are not.

Lao Tzu says: "we do not believe in such ethics."

When the Upanishads first reached the Western World, people were very much concerned; for the Upanishads are very near to Lao Tzu. Nowhere in them is mentioned that a man should not steal, that a man should not commit violence. The West was familiar only with the Ten Commandments which said – Do not commit adultery, do not steal, do no lie etc. Therefore when the Upanishads were translated, when Lao Tzu's TAO-TEH-KING was first rendered into English, the Western people thought the Orientalists to be immoral. Such are their sages? Not a single truth of Religion do they utter! The duty of religion is to teach men not to steal, be honest, not to deceive – which is nowhere in the teachings of these people! What kind of scriptures are these? – They wondered. At the first impact of the wisdom of the East, the West condemned it as immoral. But as they went deeper and their understanding increased, they realised it was not immoral. On the contrary, they had to coin a new category – a third category of Ethics. The three categories are; Immoral, moral and Trans-moral. Gradually they began to understand that these scriptures are neither ethical nor non-ethical,

rather, they do not talk about ethics at all! They are trying to unfold a mystery that goes beyond all ethics. Now they admit that these are the real Religious scriptures.

It is an interesting fact that an atheist can also be a moralist. More often than not, he is more of a moralist than atheist. The morals of atheist are his bargaining platform. He hopes to achieve heaven, a better birth, with his virtues. He knows that by undergoing a few hardships here, he will gain more happiness later. An atheist's morality is pure morality. There is no bargaining, for he does not believe in life after death.

The atheist knows that he whose deeds are virtuous dies and returns to dust and he who is evil, meets the same fate also. There are no rewards and reprisals. If even then, an atheist is virtuous, his atheism is worth more than any theism; and his morality is more genuine for there is no bargaining, no expectations behind it. He expects no rewards for good acts for there is no God to reward him; for him there are no rules of actions that are self-rewarding, there is no fortune, no new birth. To him this life is final. If I tell the truth or I tell a lie, I shall one day turn to dust all the same. If an atheist becomes virtuous his morality is much deeper than that of the theist. And this is possible for it is not difficult for an atheist to be ethical but he cannot be religious.

A theist who is only a moralist, is a more fallen man than the atheist. If a theist is religious, then only is his theism of value; otherwise his theism is lower than the ethics of an atheist. He is doing something to attain something. If a theist comes to know that there is no God, that there is no after birth, his ethics will falter and fall. If he is told that the laws are reversed and that he who tells the truth goes to hell and those who lie, go to heaven, he will promptly begin to tell lies.

But to an atheist, it will make no difference whether your God is or is not or whether heaven and hell change for he does not depend on them. He is not virtuous on account of them. If he is righteous, he is, because he is happy to be so. His reasoning tells him to be righteous and so he is – there is no other motive behind it. He finds himself more serene and peaceful by being virtuous – and so he is virtuous. A theist is a theist only if he is religious and not by being virtuous. A righteous man may become an atheist and yet be better than a theist.

Lao Tzu is propounding the most fundamental sutra of theism. He says, "Do not divide existence into the opposites. Be beyond them." Our minds that are bound by ethics will be caught with fear, and then surely we shall become immoral! The first thought that comes to mind on hearing Lao Tzu is: If we are to go beyond both then why not steal? We feel, if we leave both, the world will become evil, for we know we are good only on the surface. Our insides are filled with evil. If we relax even the slightest bit, the superficial goodness will break and the evil within will spread outside. This is an actual fear within all of us.

But Lao Tzu says: "He who is ready to go beyond the good will never be ready to fall into evil." He who is even ready to forgo the good, how will you throw him into evil? In truth, ego is the cause for man's falling into evil. We have made our ego the stepping stone into the good and this is the very cause of our falling into evil.

Lao Tzu says: "He who is not even eager to rise up to the good, will not be prepared to go even into evil. And he who is eager to rise up into the good can always be lured into evil." If he feels that evil is more fruitful than goodness, that his ego could be more satisfied by it, he will promptly go into

evil, for it is the result he is after and not the ethics. If he embraces the good it is to satisfy his ego; if he embraces the evil it is only for his ego. Lao Tzu says: "He who goes beyond both good and bad, for him there is no contrivance to rise and no means to fall." He climbs no heights and falls into no abyss. He lives on the smooth and straight plane of existence. This straight level of existence is called the 'RIT' or 'TAO', where he goes not an inch up or down. This plane level of existence is called Religion.

So Lao Tzu in this priceless sutra says: "I do not say unto you, shun evil; I do not say unto you hold on to the good. What I say is, understand that good and evil are two names of the same thing. Recognise that they are both incorporate happenings. When you recognise them as such, you will go beyond them."

Let us try to understand this is another way.

You are standing beside a flower. Is it necessary to say it is beautiful? Is it necessary to say it is ugly? And will your statement bring about a change in the flower? The flower is not at all affected by your remarks. When you say the flower is beautiful it is your own behaviour towards the flower that changes. If you call it ugly, it is again your own behaviour towards it that changes. Your remark brings about a change not in the flower but in you.

What is the criterion of beauty? What scales do we employ to measure the beauty of the flower? It is a difficult question to answer. At the very depth of your statement lies the reason for calling the flower beautiful and that is – because you think so. But is your preference a rule of beauty? What is the basis behind calling a thing ugly? It is, that you think so. But is your dislike a rule set by nature, that a thing is ugly because you dislike it? What does your like and dislike show? It indicates all about you and not4ing about the flower; for standing near the same flower, I can make my own likes and dislikes known. The flower remains the same, whether someone calls it beautiful or ugly; or whether no comment is made, the flower remains the flower. Let a thousand people make a thousand comments, the flower remains the same.

Then what do these remarks tell us about – the flower or the one who makes these remarks?

If we understand well, we shall know that all statements tell us about the speaker. Now take for instance this statement "This flower is beautiful". What I really mean to convey is that I am such a person who finds this flower beautiful. Now it is not imperative that this flower will still look beautiful to me in the evening. It may seem ugly to me by evening. Then I will have to say, "Now I have become such a person who finds this flower ugly." Are these feeling of beauty or ugliness, objective or subjective? Are they our own intrinsic feelings or the actual form of the objects? What are they? They are our mental feelings and reflections.

It is not fair to impose your mental images on the flower. Who are you to do so? What right have you? None whatsoever. But everyone of us, impose ourselves. Stand beside a flower one day. Stand still and quiet. Mind your old habit of qualifying things. Halt your judgement – the flower on one side, you on the other – let there be no judgement on the flower's beauty or ugliness.

In a few days you will find that the day when there is no conditioning, no judgement between you and the flower, you will experience an entirely new beauty of the flower, which is beyond beauty and

ugliness. There will be a completely new unfoldment of the flower before you. That day there will be no mental imagery or likes and dislikes between you and the flower. Only the flower will he – blossomed in its perfection.

And when a flower blossoms thus in its absolute perfection and without the interference of your mental images, then it has a beauty all its own, which transcends both beauty and ugliness. Remember, I say, it has a beauty all its own that is beyond our conception.

Lao Tzu says: "That alone we call beauty where ugliness has no existence." But then there is no sign of the beauty we know of. You are going along a road and the branch of a tree falls on you. You do not say the tree has done wrong, that the tree is bad, it has committed violence; that it meant to harm you and you will pay it back! No, you say no such thing. In fact you make no decisions for or against the tree. You pass no judgement against it. And this incident does not disturb your sleep at night, nor do you pass days and months thinking of ways to take revenge. And all this because you have made no decisions whether the tree acted well or otherwise. Nay, you have not even thought that the tree has done anything to you. It was a matter of coincidence that the branch fell as you passed under the tree. You do not blame the tree.

But if a man hits you with a stick or – that is still excusable for the stick causes a hurt – if a man abuses you, the mind at once makes a decision for or against the person. How can mere words wound a person? But he at once resolves to take revenge and the thought catches hold of the mind. Now there will be images formed around the vituperations and this may go on for months and years, nay even for a life-time! But where did it all start? Did it start with the man's abuse or did it start from your decisions – that is to be understood.

If you had made no decision and said that it was a matter of coincidence that you were passing and the abuse happened to slip from the man's lips, just as you happened to pass and the branch of the tree fell? If in truth we make no decisions and take it to be just a coincidence, would the anxiety have formed within us? Then could this abuse have become a wound within us? Then would we have to waste our precious time inventing fresh abuses for retaliation? No, this matter would have ended there and then. We made no decision of the right or wrong. It was a fact, we knew it as such and moved on! Lao Tzu says this is according to him – the good.

Now remember, there are very subtle differences. Now Jesus says, "If a person slaps you on the right cheek, offer him your left." Lao Tzu says, "Do not do that." For according to Lao Tzu, when you offer the left check, you will have made a decision and you have reacted! Agreed that you did not abuse but you did hit back by offering the other cheek! Jesus says, "Love your enemies." Lao Tzu says, "Don't." For when you manifest love towards your enemy, you accept him as an enemy.

Lao Tzu's exposition is very, very transcendental. Lao Tzu says, "To love the enemy, is to know him as enemy." Then whether you abused or showed hatred or professed love, these are secondary things. One thing becomes clear by this act that the enemy remains the enemy.

There is an incident in Nasruddin's life that one day he slapped his younger brother. His father rebuked him saying, "Nasruddin, it was only yesterday that you were reading 'One should love even one's enemy!'" Nasruddin replied, "That is true father, but he is no enemy, he is my brother."

”Accept the enemy” Lao Tzu says, ”And the decision is made.” Then he says, ”You agree that this man has done wrong and therefore he is to be answered not by evil but by goodness.”

Jesus says, ”Return goodness for evil.” But the fact remains that you have decided the quality of the act as bad. Then if we react to this with goodness, it will be a righteous act but not a religious one. Lao Tzu says, ”No answer! for you make no decisions about the happening.” The matter ends there. You refuse to think beyond this. You do not allow any thought of this incident to rise within you. A man slapped you, the matter finished there, the happening ended. You do not start anything within yourself with this incident. You do not think whether he did wrong or right, whether he was friend or foe. Who is he, what should you do, what you should not do – you start no reflections within your mind. The incident finished, the door is closed, the chapter is over. You call it the end, you do not draw it further in your mind. ”Then,” Lao Tzu says, ”You are religious.” If you even say this much, ”This should not have happened, now what shall I do?” Then you will have missed. To differentiate is to fall from Religion. Decision brings the fall in Religion.

Lao Tzu’s whole endeavour is to awaken you to the deep-seated habit of the mind of breaking things into two. You should be wide awake before the mind breaks a thing into two; for once it succeeds in breaking a thing, it is difficult for you to step out of the circle. So wake up and do not let the mind catch you napping!

This is why Lao Tzu raises the question of Beauty and the Good. These two alone, are the fundamental differences. On the differences of Beauty stands all our sense of the Aesthetic. On the differences of the good and the evil stand our entire principles of ethics. Lao Tzu says, ”Religion is within neither of these, Religion is beyond both of these – lovable-unlovable, desirable-undesirable, beautiful-ugly, good-evil, auspicious-inauspicious – beyond all these differences is Religion.”

Lao Tzu will never say, ”To forgive is divine.” He will say, ”You forgave, so you admitted the rising of anger.” No, when anger or forgiveness arises within you, be alert and observe that now the contradictory part of the duality is rising within you. Therefore, we cannot call Lao Tzu forgiving. If we ask Lao Tzu ”You forgive everybody?” He will reply ”I have never been angry with anyone.” If someone abuses Lao Tzu, he will say nothing and just go his way. We might think he has forgiven the man but we are mistaken. Lao Tzu is not angry with the man so the question of forgiveness does not arise. Forgiveness is possible only when anger comes and once anger comes, where is the forgiveness? That is a mere cover, a dressing to hide the wound. Lao Tzu says, ”I did not get angry in the first instance, so I did not have to undergo the trouble of forgiving. That is the second step I would have had to take if I had been angry.”

Lao Tzu’s complete stress is on alertness towards the pairs of opposites. One should be alert and watchful before they arise so that one remains care-free and impartial. Do not enter into the turmoil of the dualities.

Question 1

QUESTION: BHAGWAN SRI, JUST AS YOU EXPLAINED THE PROCESS OF ANNIHILATION OF ANGER YESTERDAY, ARE THERE METHODS OF ANNIHILATING, SEX, GREED, DELUSION AND EGO ALSO? KINDLY ENUMERATE THESE TOO.

Bhagwan Sri: Sex, anger, greed, delusion, ego! It seems man is surrounded by many ailments! This is not true. These are not so many maladies. The illness is only one. The same energy manifests in all these. If you suppress sex it turns into anger. We all have suppressed sex therefore there is anger within all of us more or less. . Now if you want to escape anger, you will have to give it another form or else it will not let you live. So if you can transform your anger into greed, you will become a less tempered person, for your anger will now flow in greed. You will not now directly strangle a person but you will now throttle him indirectly through money.

One fact must be remembered – that there is only one energy in man. We can put it to use in many ways. If we become mentally ill, this energy flows in a thousand directions and if you try to fight with each of these directions, you will become insane. You will then be fighting with the branches but the roots will remain unaffected. So the first thing is to understand that the fundamental energy is one only. If any transformation is to be brought about, it is, necessary to establish a direct contact with it instead of grappling with its manifestations.

The easiest method is to begin with the strongest of these maladies. If you think that anger is your biggest trouble then that is your chief characteristic. When anyone went to Gurdjieff, he first tried to find out his chief ailment his chief characteristic.

Every man has a chief characteristic. It is greed in some and anger in others; it is sex in some and fear in others, while for yet others it is pride. So catch hold of the overriding trait, for it is the strongest current flowing from the fundamental energy. If it is anger then take hold of your anger; if it is sex begin to tackle your sex. Begin by practising this method of vigilance on your particular trait and also of catharsis as I told you yesterday about anger. I told you how a friend, is carrying out catharsis of anger by beating up a pillow and how effective it has proved.

You have to do two things to the special trait within you. The first thing to be done is to become completely aware of it for the difficulty always is, that we try our best to hide our short-comings. A wrathful person is always preoccupied in hiding his wrath lest it leaks out from somewhere. He invents a thousand lies to cover his anger so that others may not know of it – much less himself. Now if a thing is not known, it cannot be changed. Remove all the screens, all the layers and know your trait in its complete nakedness.

The second thing to do is, to be absolutely alert as you observe your distinctive trait. For instance when anger comes, we at once think of the person who made us angry and never about the one who gets angry. If you are the cause of my anger, I at once begin to think about you and forget myself completely, whereas the actual party is me, who has become angry. The one who caused anger was only a cause, an excuse. He no longer matters. He threw a match-stick and blew up the gunpowder within me. His spark would have been useless if there were no ammunition within me. What I see is not the heap of ammunition within me but the spark of the adversary. Then I feel that it is he who has caused all the burning within me. The truth is, he only threw a single match, it is the explosives within me that flared up. And it is also possible the man may not have thrown the match knowingly. He may not even be aware of the conflagration within you!

You put complete blame for this fiasco on the other man. Therefore, many a time the poor man cannot understand why such a small thing has upset you so much! This is always the difficulty. The matter in question is always too negligible but the anger inflamed is colossal. So the one who causes

anger is always at a loss to understand how a single ordinary statement can bring about such wrath! You yourself must have wondered at times when your statement angered another person. But this is a natural fallacy. All the fire that burns within me. I feel you have created. You throw the spark and the powder within me explodes. How much it spreads, it is difficult to tell.

Whenever anger seizes us, our attention is focussed on the man who has caused it. In that case, it is difficult to step out of anger. When anyone brings about anger in you, forget him immediately and concentrate on him to whom anger is happening. Remember, no amount of concentration brings any change in the adversary. If any change is to be brought about, it can only be in the one who is angry.

Whenever anger or greed or sex or anything takes hold of you, drop the object of their happening immediately. A man or woman causes the mind to become sexual. Remember, he or she has merely thrown the match – perhaps unknowingly. In the matter of anger, there is some attempt from the other, in the matter of sex there is almost no attempt from the other side. A woman is crossing the road. You look at her and your sex is stimulated. Then also, your attention is entirely on her. You do not throw a glance within to see what this energy in which is inflamed by sex. This is how we fail to observe ourselves and without self-observation no transformation takes place life. So when sex overpowers you, forget the object, forget that which catches hold of your sex, which catches hold of your anger, your greed etc.

And begin to look within – what is happening within! Do not suppress. Allow full freedom to whatever is happening. Close yourself in a room, and plunge whole-heartedly in the happening.

It is better to see what is happening as clearly as possible.

If anger rages within, shout, cry, jump, talk, babble, do whatever you please. Close the doors and observe your own madness in its entirety, for others have witnessed it many times. It is only you who have not seen it; others have watched the fun at your expense. You become aware of it only when everything is over; when the fire has gone and only the ashes remain.

Remember, the ashes give no news of the fire. No matter how high the heap, it gives no inkling of even a spark. And if a man has never seen fire, he can draw no conclusion from the ashes. No logic can lead from ash to fire. No inference can be drawn about the nature and form of fire from the ash. Whenever you look at your own anger, it is like looking at the ashes – when all is gone. Then you sit moaning over the heap of ashes – and it is no use. Watch when the fire burns in full force.

It will be easier to observe if it is allowed freedom of expression. Remember, when you exhibit on others, it is not in its full form. If you are angry on your husband or wife or son or daughter, the anger is not complete. There are limitations of displeasure. For no wife or husband is such that all the anger can be expressed. So I will display some anger and keep the rest within myself. No one ever gives complete vent to his anger. When a father gets angry with a small child, even then he is not completely angry though the child is so helpless he could even wring his neck! A hundred limitations bar the way. Anger is expressed to some extent only, lending no pleasure in the act. Nor is the pain complete. Therefore we indulge in it time and again.

If you want to observe anger in its entirety, you will have to observe it alone, in the privacy of your

room. Then alone can you see it in its fullness, for then there are no limitations. This is why I advise the pillow meditation to certain people, so that they can observe their anger fully.

Today I have come to know, through the partner of the friend who was carrying out the pillow-meditation lately, that he had taken out a knife and torn the pillow into pieces! I had not told him to do this! It sounds funny – such madness! But we do not laugh when a living person is stabbed in anger though the passion gratified is the same as when ripping open a pillow! Whether it is a pillow or a human being – that is immaterial. More pleasure is derived from stabbing the pillow however, for there are no limitations.

Close yourself in your room and when your overriding trait catches hold of you, allow it to manifest itself to the full. Consider it as meditation. Give it complete expression. Allow it to come out of every pore of your body. Then reflect on it – you will laugh! You will even be surprised at what all you can do! Your mind will also wonder how you could ever do all that – and that too when you are alone! If there was someone present, then it was excusable!

You will feel restless the first or second time. The third time you will be in full form. And when you indulge in it whole-heartedly, you will get a strange experience. You will find that outwardly you are doing all this but within, a consciousness stands and watches. This is impossible when the other is concerned but by yourself, it becomes easy. All around the flames of anger will surround you, you will stand in the centre – alone and apart. And once a person observes his anger apart from himself, once someone observes his sex or his greed or his fear thus, a ray of knowledge begins to emit in his life.

He has attained an experience.

He has recognised one of his powers and now it is impossible for him to be deceived through this particular energy. We become the masters of that power which we recognize. The energy that we clearly perceive, no longer enslaves us; whereas the power we do not recognize, keeps us enslaved.

So you can take the pillow to be your beloved or you can take it to be the Kohinoor diamond. You can look upon it as your enemy before whom you tremble. It makes no difference who you are or what you are. It is not difficult for you to recognize your particular trait for it is after you all the twenty-four hours. You know very well what your main characteristic is.

Each person has only one main characteristic. Everything else is joined on to this. If sex is the fundamental trait, anger, greed will be secondary. If such a man is greedy, it is only to satisfy his sex. If he is angry, it will be on account of his sex. If he is fearful it will only be for fear of some hindrance in sex. The primary weakness will be for sex. All other weaknesses are secondary.

If anger is your primary characteristic, you will love only if you can take your anger out on your beloved. Your sex will be secondary. Such a man is only capable of loving those on whom he can be wrathful. His basic weakness is anger. Then if he amasses wealth it will only be to have the strength of money to vent his anger. He may be conscious of this fact or not but it is true that as this man's wealth increases his capacity to be angry increases in the same proportion. All those whom he has under his thumb with the power of his wealth will be crushed completely. If such a man aspires to attain a high position, it will only be to satisfy his wrath. Many a time, it is impossible to trace the presence of anger, the camouflage is so complete.

Winston Churchill's daughter, married a youth he did not like. He was against this marriage and was filled with anger at the prospect of having him as his son-in-law. He had to gulp his anger. The wedding took place. He never told the youth what he felt about him and so he knew nothing of Churchill's feelings towards him. He would address him as 'Papa' but whenever he called him 'Papa', Churchill used to burn with rage within. He just could not bear the idea of his addressing him so. But he never told him anything about this.

Soon after the 2nd World War, one day the youth called on Churchill. He asked him, "Whom do you consider the greatest politician of today Papa?" The word 'Papa' again disturbed Churchill. He at once replied, "Mussolini". His son-in-law was very surprised. How could he call his enemy and that too, Mussolini, the greatest politician? There were other greatness – Roosevelt, Stalin and even Hitler. Besides, Churchill was in no way less than these! He was definitely much greater than Mussolini!

The youth asked him what made him consider Mussolini the greatest. Churchill tried to evade him but the youth persisted. "If you must know, I consider him the greatest politician because he had the guts to shoot his son-in-law. When you address me as 'Papa'. I feel like doing the same, only, I have not the guts to do it."

There are many folds within our brain. We hide them, suppress them, yet they come up on the surface at times. They come up and reveal themselves. Sometimes we manage to hide them for a life-time! Therefore it happens that a man thinks there is that within him, which is not there at all! and what is within him, he is not conscious of. Try to find out what is within you in greater measure keep a diary and write in it faithfully, what you do the most everyday.

Try to know three things: Which tendency is more? Greed, or, sex or fear or anger – what? Then try and find out, which tendency is repeated the greatest number of times? Then also try to recognise whether this repetition gives the greatest amount of interest and pleasure. Also note that the savour can be of two kinds: There may be enjoyment in it or remorse. In both the cases, the relish will be there. The third thing to observe is, that if this particular tendency is taken away from you completely will your personality remain the same or will it change? If the chief trait of your character is removed, your personality becomes completely different. You cannot imagine yourself without this chief characteristic.

Keep a diary for fifteen days. Keep an account of all the twenty-four hours of the day and then draw the conclusion. You will be then able to detect the primary trait within you. Then become aware of this fundamental trait. Then whenever this tendency arises within, go into seclusion and witness its manifestations. Be a witness. Catharsis will take place and you will also be well acquainted with it. Then you will begin to feel more a master of yourself.

If you remember what Lao Tzu says when you are passing through this process, it will become easier and simpler for you. If you want to know anger only to be rid of it, it is very difficult, for the attitude of being rid of anger creates a distinction. Then you have started with the assumption that anger is bad, 'No-anger', is good; that sex is bad and 'Non-sexuality' is good; that greed is bad and 'no-greed' is good. If you raise such distinctions, you will find a lot of difficulty to know the traits in actuality. Then even if you transcend them, it will only be repression.

If in this connection, we remember Lao Tzu's words, there is no need to connect anger with 'no-anger'. It is not at all necessary to think that anger is bad. Initially, we do not even know what anger is. Then how can we decide it is bad? This is a borrowed decision. You have heard others saying that anger is bad, so you say, anger is bad but you keep on being angry! Drop your judgements and strive to know what is anger! Do not be hasty in your judgement. Who knows whether it is good or bad? Be absolutely impartial. Only then will anger open all its hidden unfolds before you. If you start with the assumption that anger is bad, the deep-seated layers will remain hidden and unknown.

For a total revelation of the entire tendency, an absolutely unbiased mind is required. All the suppression is on account of the fact that that tendency has been branded as bad. So if you still consider it to be bad, you will still be suppressing it. It is on account of this that a most unfortunate happening takes place: The more a man tries to be rid of anger, the more wrathful he becomes. To escape a thing, it has to be subdued.

It is necessary to know a thing if we want to be liberated from it. It is impossible for a suppressed mind to know. Go forth without any bias. As the lightning flashes across the sky and we do not think whether it is good or bad, as the clouds pass – and they are neither good nor bad, so the flash of anger, the currents of greed, the energy of passion, pass within us. This is true. These are energies, observe them with an impartial mind-without any malice and without any foregone conclusions. A foregone conclusion will prevent your coming to the actual conclusion. Let the conclusion be in the end.

Or else, you will be in the same state as a school going child, who turns the pages and sees the answer first! Once the answer is known, the problem is difficult to solve. There is no need to worry about the answer. You have to concentrate on the process. The answer will come by itself. If the answer is known beforehand, there remains no interest in the process, in the eagerness of our reaching to conclusion. We are all well invested with the answers. Our forefathers have handed down their books to us, opened at the wrong end. First we know the answers then we come to the text. So we are not acquainted with the method of all for it is but natural to think, what use is the method when the answer is known? We know anger is bad, we know sexuality is bad.

It was only eight days ago that a friend came and told me: "I heard you speak on the Gita. I liked it very much, therefore I have come. I heard you speak on sex and I was very much pained – so much, I stopped coming to your discourses. But I heard Gita from you and am so pleased that I have come to meet you." "What is your trouble now?" I asked. He said: "My trouble is sex. It torments me so." So I told him, "I shall not talk to you about sex, for you will be pained again. You read the Gita and find out your path." What strange people! I told him to go away and not to come to ask me anything about sex. If he had anything to ask about Gita he was welcome for you should ask only that which you like! Sex is the problem and you are afraid to know anything and he who offers to help you in this problem, appears your enemy! Nothing is gained or lost by Gita, it does not touch your problems of life. So hear it away merrily for you have nothing to do with it!

We stand outside, the stream of Gita flows away – away and apart! I asked him, "What sort of a man are you?" And this is not the case of one man alone. I know many who have the same problem but who are afraid to admit it as their problem. They always insist on a private interview to discuss it with me and request that their problems may not be made public. I say to them that this is as much a personal problem of others as theirs. Now everyone hears the Gita in public but about sex, each one

wants a private audience. How is that possible? Besides, you are afraid even to raise the question of your actual problem, whereas you delight in hearing that which is not your problem at all!

Thus thousands of years pass and man is still the same. Catch hold of your problem, do not be certain about the answer from first. What should be the assumption to begin with is – "I do not know, I know not whether anger is good or bad, beautiful or ugly. Let me know it in its thoroughness." And wonder of wonders – He who knows it in its entirety finds himself liberated from it! And he who tries to be liberated from it, never knows it in its fulness. Understand this difficulty. He who wants tc. be liberated has presumed at the outset that it is bad so he does not raise the question of the process. He says "I know it is bad. there is no need to find out. All I need to know now is how to be rid of it." There is only one method for liberation – complete knowledge. But this man says he 'knows' it is bad! Then he cannot go through the full process of knowing. I request you to go through the process, attain the complete knowledge and not depend on borrowed conclusions.

Whether it is the Buddha, Christ or me – it makes no difference. It is your own conclusion that matters. Step within yourself without any prejudice, without any assumptions and see what is anger. Let your anger reveal to you what anger is. Do not impose your presumptions on it. And the very day you discover anger in its complete nakedness, in its complete hideousness, in its burning fire, in its murderous venom, you will suddenly discover that you have stepped out of it. Anger has vanished!

Any tendency can be treated this way – which tendency, does not matter. The process is the same, for the illness is the same, only the names are different.

Enough for today. We shall talk again tomorrow.

CHAPTER 6

The music of opposing notes

24 June 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 2: SUTRA 2

SO IT IS THAT EXISTENCE AND NON-EXISTENCE GIVE BIRTH THE ONE TO THE IDEA OF THE OTHER; THAT DIFFICULTY AND EASE PRODUCE THE ONE THE IDEA OF THE OTHER; THAT LENGTH AND SHORTNESS FASHION OUT THE ONE THE FIGURE OF THE OTHER; THAT THE IDEA OF HEIGHT AND LOWNESS ARISE FROM THE CONTRAST OF THE ONE WITH THE OTHER; THAT THE MUSICAL NOTES AND TONES BECOME HARMONIOUS THROUGH THE RELATIONSHIP OF ONE WITH ANOTHER; AND THAT BEING BEFORE AND BEHIND GIVE THE IDEA OF ONE FOLLOWING ANOTHER.

That which is opposing, that which is contrary, is also allied. The enemy is also the friend, the relative.

Lao Tzu does not see the opposing as the hostile; he does not consider the far away to be far away; and he does not understand the contrary to be the opposite. Lao Tzu maintains: ”All distant things are measured by their proximities. All proximities are the diminutive forms of the distant things.” If you want to draw a white line, you need a black background. Therefore, he who says white is the opposite of black, is mistaken. We have to make use of black in order to bring out the white in all its distinction. He who says the morning destroys the night, is mistaken. The truth is, the morn is born out of the night. Things which we see as contrasting and opposite, Lao Tzu sees as united joined. It is a complete gestalt; his manner of seeing things, is absolutely contrary to ours.

Where we see tension in between things, Lao Tzu sees an attraction; where we see clearly that someone is trying to destroy us, Lao Tzu says, it is impossible for us to exist without them. He illustrates his points with many examples.

He says, "If there are not two, there is no place for one." This is an arithmetical example. Mathematicians admit that if we want to preserve the number 1, we will have to preserve all the following numbers. If we wipe out all numbers from 2 onwards, there will be no meaning left to 1. Whatever is in 1, is all due to 2. Think for a moment: If we had only the figure of 1, what will it means? Nothing. It will be meaningless. Its meaning construes from its expansions into 2, 3, 4.....9. If we remove all figures after 1, 1 becomes meaningless.

Lao Tzu says: "One is not apart from Two. It is a part of Two." He says, if we remove the heights, what will become of the depths? If we remove the mountains, will the valleys remain? How? And yet the valleys look just the opposite of the mountain-tops. The peaks of the mountains seem to touch the skies whereas the valleys plunge deep into the netherlands. But Lao Tzu says, "The valleys are formed near and only because of the mountains." In fact, the valley is the other part of the peak of the mountains – its other dimension. Destroy the one and you destroy the other. If we destroy the peaks, the valleys are destroyed. But we always see them as opposites of each other.

Lao Tzu says, "The valleys are the support of the peaks. The peaks are creators of the valleys, "Both these are connected – one – and there is no way of separating them. And Lao Tzu says: "How can we call that opposing which we cannot tear apart?"

How can we call that contrasting, which we cannot separate?

A life-long enemy of Napoleon died. Napoleon's eyes were filled with tears. His friend told him, "You should be happy to be rid of a life-long enemy!" Napoleon said, "I do not understand myself. Today seeing him dead, he whom I had no hope of ever befriending, I feel a part of me is lost. I shall now no longer be what I was during his life-time." This feeling of Napolean makes Lao Tzu's theory absolutely clear.

Napoleon says, "Something died within me at the death of my enemy; something that could only be when he was alive. I am now the poorer to that extent. There was something in me which was entirely due to him. Today, he no longer is and within me also, it is not the same." This means that even enemies have a hand in making your personality and not your friends alone. Without enemies you will be less, you will be empty.

Lao Tzu says there are no opposing forces on this earth. They only appear so. Illness is not the opposite of health. If we ask the medical science, it too will say that illness is part of health. It is necessary to be healthy in order to be ill. Without being healthy, we cannot be ill. It is therefore that a dead man does not fall ill. Hence, it invariably happens, that after a certain age, death also becomes difficult. When a man does not have enough well-being even to die, it becomes very difficult. After the age of 80-90, death too. comes crawling.

Lukman has said that if a man has never fallen ill, he dies in his first illness. He is so alive that the first illness kills him. A man who falls ill many times, does not die easily. In order to die instantaneously, a living well-being is required.

This sounds contradictory. We see illness as against health. But if we observe from within, we shall find that illness is a means of protection for good health. The tough endeavour the body makes to preserve your health, is the illness itself. A man gets fever; this only means that the body has heated

up in its effort to preserve your health. It is putting up a fight for your well-being, so much so, that it is tired. In existence, illness and good-health, are two parts of the same thing.

All contradictions and all oppositions are no contradictions according to Lao Tzu. If a man wishes never to be insulted, he must remember he will never be respected either. He who expects to be honoured, should be ready for insults. And only he is revered who has passed through many indignities. So also Lao Tzu says, "He who does not wish to be insulted should also not aspire for honours. Then only can he not be insulted."

Lao Tzu has said: "I always sat there, from where no one could displace me. I sat in the very last seat, where people placed their sandals. I sat where there was no further lower place I could be pushed into." "No one ever insulted me, says Lao Tzu, "For I never craved for honour." Desire honour and indignity comes. If there is not the readiness for insult, there is no means for honour and esteem. He who dreams of rising up is sure to fall. He who is afraid to fall should not venture to climb up and he who has the courage to fall, may endeavour to climb up. What Lao Tzu means to say is, that it is wrong to try to escape the opposite and it is in our effort to do so that we find ourselves in trouble. Either forsake them both or be prepared for both.

Existence is one. The existence we know and which is in the world of our mind is dual. Everything there is arranged thus – among the opposites; like an architect making an arc. In fact the word architect means one who makes arcs. The art behind the making of an are comprises in the inverse arrangement of bricks. Half bricks are placed in inverted arrangement along the are and this is why the arch can bear any weight above. The reverse placing of the bricks causes them to press against each other. They are always at war with each other and this generates power. This power upholds the whole building. One might think, if the reverse position of bricks creates so much force. what if we placed all the bricks in one position? The are will never be made. It is the reverse arrangement that generates a force capable of upholding the whole structure.

The door of life, the support of life is entirely based on the law of the opposites, whenever there is one thing, the opposite is ready immediately to hold it. Whether it be man or woman, the positive pole or the negative, whether the sky or the earth, whether fire or water, all around us, existence stands supported by the pairs of opposites. The opposites help each other. The bricks that are placed in opposite directions are not enemies but friends and their very contrariness forms the basis.

So Lao Tzu gives examples and says, "SO IT IS THAT EXISTENCE AND NON-EXISTENCE GIVE BIRTH THE ONE TO THE IDEA OF THE OTHER." Existence gives the idea of non-existence. Non-existence gives the idea of existence. In other words, life gives the idea of death, death gives the idea of life. We cannot think what existence would be like without non-existence. We cannot think what life would be like if there were no death. If there is life there is bound to be death. There is no way for life to exist without death. Why does Lao Tzu say this?

He says this so that once this comes within your understanding, your mind will be filled with the feeling of acceptance. Then you no longer will be afraid of death. Then you will know it to be a necessary part of life. Then you will have the ability to accept and welcome death also. Then you will understand that when we desire life, we automatically desire death. If I take a step towards life, I invariably walk towards death. Then you will know that to accept life alone, is foolish. Life can only be together with death. Life and death cannot be chosen separately, they go together. If I desire life

I must desire death also. If I do not desire death, I cannot desire life. Then in both these conditions, an uncommon knowledge is born.

If a man gives up the desire both for life and death, he attains the state of non-attachment. Or if he embraces life and death together and makes no distinction between them, then too, he reaches the state of supreme non-attachment. The pair should be accepted completely or not accepted at all, then only can you slip out of the pairs of opposites.

Generally what we do is, we try to save one against the other. The mind says, "Life is worth saving, death deserves to be shunned. Love should he upheld and hate should be discarded; the friend should be protected, the enemy destroyed." The mind says, "Honour is welcome, indignity is not; health should be there but not illness; youth should come but not old age." The mind craves for happiness and runs away from unhappiness. When the mind thus chooses one against the other, life becomes a distress, an anxiety and an useless tension. To choose one and leave the other, is the cause of all grief and sorrow. Accept both or reject both. Then alone the state of absolute bliss and supreme contentment is born.

Lao Tzu wants to show that whether you deny or whether you accept, the pairs cannot be broken apart. They are united. To call them united is an expression of language. Actually, they are one. They are the two ends of the same thing. It is just as if a man would say, "I shall breathe in but I shall not breathe out." This man will surely die for the in-going breath is also the out-going breath. Either both should remain or both should not. There is no way of keeping one and dropping the other. All Lao Tzu's illustrations are to explain this point.

He says that EXISTENCE AND NON-EXISTENCE BOTH JOIN AND GIVE BIRTH TO THE IDEA OF ONE ANOTHER. They are comrades, friends and not enemies. They are not against each other, they complement each other. Complex and simple create the idea of each other. If a man desires to be simple, as sadhus invariably do, they become more difficult, more complex. This is bound to happen. It is possible that in trying to be simple, he may keep only one pair of clothes, eat once in the day, sleep under a tree. All this he can do but he will still not be simple. So much effort and arrangement is required for the purpose, so much method and discipline are necessary, so much practice is necessary to sleep under a tree that all this will make the mind very complex and difficult.

The meaning of simplicity is, that a man should sleep even in a palace as if he were sleeping under a tree. We can easily visualize one type of difficulty. If a King who is used to all luxuries in life is made to put on a loin-cloth and sleep under a tree, we can very well understand his difficulty. But have you ever thought of the difficulty that a man, who is always clad in a loin-cloth and who always sleeps under a tree, would experience if he is suddenly loaded with the luxuries of a palace? His difficulty would be as great – perhaps greater. It requires no special discipline to live in a palace but it definitely requires great discipline to sleep under a tree. No arrangements or methods are required to wear beautiful clothes but great sadhana and effort is required before a person can discard clothes. So if we suddenly clothe the unclad, he will be very much troubled. He will experience a great deal of difficulty within himself.

Diogenes was a fakir. He once went to visit Socrates. Socrates was a very simple person – a simple person who had not cultivated simplicity. He who cultivates simplicity, becomes complex. Socrates had not cultivated simplicity, he had never favoured any form of simplicity against non-simplicity.

Diogenes was a complex person for he had cultivated simplicity. He used to go about naked. If anybody offered him new clothes, he would dirty them, tear them into rags and then wear them. He practised simplicity.

When he saw Socrates he said: ”I wonder how you call yourself a good man, a simple man, when you are clad in such finery?” Socrates laughed. ”It is quite possible that I am not simple.” he said, ”It is quite possible what you say is correct.” Diogenes did not understand, how this could be the trait of a person who is simple. ”So you agree?” He asked Socrates, ”In fact that is what I have been telling people, that you are not a simple man. So you confirm what I said?” Socrates replied, ”Since you say so, I see no reason to deny, I must be complex.” Diogenes laughed out loud and left.

As he was going down the steps, he met Socrates’ disciple, Plato, ”Listen!” he called out to him ”Your Guru has admitted before people in so many words, that he is not simple!” Plato eyed him from top to bottom and said, ”Do not ever go naked far from within the holes of your clothes, I can see nothing but ego oozing out.” He further said, ”Little do you know that this is the indication of a man of simplicity, that he accepts what anyone has to give him! Your simplicity, that you declare from house-tops is very intricate, very un-simple.” A cultured simplicity becomes intricate, whereas an uncultivated complexity does also become simplicity. The real question is not a choice between the opposites. It is intriguing how as soon as one is chosen, the opposite appears at once. If we cultivate non-violence, the element of violence will at once present itself within us. Therefore, he who practises non-violence, becomes violent in a very subtle manner. He who practises celibacy (BRAHMCHARYA) becomes sexual deep within himself. Without the opposite, we cannot cultivate anything, for in order to cultivate we have to fight the opposite.

Another intriguing fact is, that we become just like that which we fight against. It is possible that you may not be influenced by your friends but it is impossible not to be influenced by your enemies. The impression of the enemy is bound to be. If a person decides to be an enemy of violence deep within him he is bound to remain violent no matter how much of non-violence he cultivates. If someone decides to become ego-less, to wipe off his ego, his state will be like that of Diogenes. His ego will peep out from every tear in his garment.

Lao Tzu says ”Simplicity and complexity give birth to the supposition of each other.” If you come to know that you are simple, then know for certain you have become complex. If you feel you have become non-violent, know that your violence has become strong and robust. If you feel you have attained celibacy, know that you have fallen into the abyss of sexuality. If you declare you have attained God, know that you have missed Him. All our declarations are for the opposite always. And you cannot escape the opposites. Therefore simplicity is undeclared. He who is simple, is not aware of his simplicity.

Understand it this way: When you are healthy and well, you are not at all aware of health. Only an invalid is aware of health. This seems contradictory but all the same true. When you are absolutely well, you have no knowledge of health. When illness knocks at your door, you become conscious of health. Only the invalids are conscious of their bodies. Therefore in the Ayurveda, the indication af a healthy person is the feeling of Godlessness. He is called healthy, who is not aware of his body. If he is aware of the body, then he is ill. In fact, as soon as you became conscious of some part of your body, that part is ill. If you become aware of the stomach, you have an upset stomach. If you become aware of the head, your head is ill. Have you ever been aware of the head without a

headache? If you are aware in the slightest bit. the illness is present in that proportion. Health is a natural state. It is not aware of anything.

When a person really becomes simple, he is not aware of the fact that he has become simple. He becomes so simple that if anyone comes and tells him he appears a complex person, he readily agrees. He attains God and is merged so much in Him, that if anyone tells him that he knows nothing, he readily agrees. He becomes so non-violent that he is not conscious of his non-violence, for this thought can come to a violent person only.

In the same manner the bulk and the miniature create the shape of each other. The bulk looks big and the miniature small. The universe seems gigantic and the atom, a miniature; but it is the conjunction of atoms that forms the Universe. Remove the atoms and the Universe is nowhere. Remove the drop and the Ocean will be no more, though the Ocean does not know that it is the drop from which it is born. The ocean is nothing but a collection of drops; and if each drop goes to form the ocean, the drop also is a miniature ocean. The drop can be described in no other way. So it will not be wrong if we say that the drop is a small ocean and the ocean is a big drop and this is very near the truth.

That which we call the Extension, that which we call the Enormous, that which we call the Universe are all atoms. So that which we call the Universe is nothing but an atom, and that which we call an atom, is also the Universe.

"There is no difference between the body and the Universe," so say the Rishis of the Upanishads. "There is no difference between the big and the small; everything and nothing is one and the same." Lao Tzu says, "All the differences we behold are nothing more than illusion."

If we question a scientist, he will agree with Lao Tzu.

You will be surprised to know that many young Western Scientists are now very interested in Lao Tzu. They are debating the possibility of a new science being evolved on the basis of Lao Tzu's teachings. A very important thinker and mathematician has written a book called. "Tao and Science." Can an entirely new kind of science be evolved from the Teachings of Lao Tzu?

It will because the science of the West up-to-date, has evolved on the Greek ideology that accepts the corresponding idea. All Western Science is Aristotle-oriented. It stands on the doctrines of Aristotle. There is no greater an opponent to Aristotle than Lao Tzu. The Eastern Ideology is that of Lao Tzu whereas, the Western Ideology is that of Aristotle.

If we understand the differences between them, we shall be able to comprehend better.

Aristotle says, "Darkness is darkness; light is light. Both are different and apart. There is no meeting-point between the two." And he says, "The evident requires no proof." Light a lamp and the darkness vanishes. Put off the lamp and there is nothing but darkness. Therefore, it follows, that darkness comes in the absence of light and light comes in the absence of darkness. So Aristotle maintains that light is light and darkness is darkness and the two never meet anywhere. The topic of his ideology is based on this: A is A, B is B and A cannot be B.

If we want to explain Lao Tzu's ideology in the language of Aristotle it will be like this: A is A and A is also B; and A cannot remain A, without becoming B. Aristotle's ideology is a solid ideology. Lao Tzu's, ideology is fluid. Lao Tzu says, things are in such a fluid state that they flow into their opposites and change. The valley becomes the peak of the mountain and the peak becomes the valley. Life becomes death and from death evolves life again. Youth changes into old age and the old are reborn into children. No, darkness is not darkness and light is not light. Darkness is the dim form of light and light is the bright form of darkness. Lao Tzu or Aristotle – such is the decisive state of the world today. So the scientists of the West think that if science is developed on the basis of Lao Tzu's ideology, it will have an entirely different dimension. Up to now, all their knowledge is based on the Greek ideology and Aristotle is the father of Greek Ideology. His doctrines have been developed over a period of two thousand years. Aristotle and Einstien are the two links of the same chain. Their logic, their way of thinking is the same.

Lao Tzu is absolutely opposite. If Lao Tzu becomes the father of a Science, it will be a different science altogether. We cannot imagine what its vision will be.

Understand it this way:

If Aristotle is right, we shall be able to destroy death and preserve life. The more we annihilate death, the more of life will be preserved. If some day we succeed in annihilating death completely, we shall be able to preserve absolute life. The there will be life and life alone.

But according to Lao Tzu, it is just the opposite. If we annihilate death, we destroy life also. If death is completely destroyed, life will be no more. Let us examine this properly in context with the happenings of today. Now this is interesting that the more cures we have found for man's ailment, the more ill man has become. His health has not improved by the advance of medical sciences.

In the times of Lao Tzu there were not so many cures to fight the diseases, as they are today. Even today, the Adivasis in the jungles do not have so many medicines to fight diseases; but they are much more healthier than us. The proofs of their health is amazing. It is said that in the African jungles there are uncivilised people whose wounds (of any type) heal within 48 hours without any treatment! An axe falls on the foot, the wound heals up within 48 hours. Scientists say, their health is unsurpassed. They are so full of vitality and this vitality quickly fills up the wounds – without any treatment or with such cures as they know. They might tie a leaf on it, which may have no meaning medically. The Adivasi or the African jungle man is surrounded on all sides by disease. He has no means of medicine or medical research, yet his health is extraordinary!

Lao Tzu can be correct. He says, the more you try to eradicate disease, the more you will destroy health. If the universe stands on duality, if you remove the bricks from one side, the opposite bricks on the other side are bound to fall. Now the Western scientists have begun to apply their minds to Lao Tzu for they feel he may be right.

There is an ancient story: It is said that an old follower of Lao Tzu, who was 90 years old, was busy pulling water from the well, together with his young son.

Confucius and Lao Tzu were contemporaries. There was as much difference between them as between Aristotle and Lao Tzu. Confucius' way of thinking is Aristotalean, therefore. the West

honoured Confucius very much these last 300 years. It is only now that Lao Tzu is rising in their esteem. This is because Science now finds itself in a strange predicament and is faced with great difficulty.

To continue our story: Confucius happened to pass by. He saw the old man and his young son, yoked together pulling water from the well. He was filled with compassion. He went up to the old man and said: "Do you not know, you foolish fellow, that now we harness horses or oxen to do this job? Why are vou unnecessarily tiring yourself and this young boy?"

The old man said, "Hush! Pray speak softly lest my son hears! Come after some time when my boy goes for lunch." Confucius was perplexed. When the youth left, he asked the old man, "Why would you not let your son hear what I said?" He replied, "I am 90 years old and yet I have the strength to work side by side with a youth of 30. If I engage horses to pull the water, my son will not have the same strength at 90, that I have now. So I pray to you, do not talk of this before my son. It is a question of his health. We have heard that in towns, the horses pull water from the well. We also know that there are machines that do this job as well. But then, what will my son do? What will happen to his health, his constitution?"

What we do on one hand has an immediate effect on the other.

If Lao Tzu is correct, the result will be disastrous. For example: We want to sleep soundly. He who wishes to sleep soundly is, inveritably fond of rest. And he who does not toil, cannot sleep soundly. Lao Tzu says, "Work and rest are both united. If you wish to relax, toil hard." Strive so hard that relaxation falls on you. Now if we think the Aristotalean way, work and rest are different and opposite. If I am fond of rest and comfort, and wish to sleep soundly, I shall just sit around the whole day and do nothing. But he who rests in the day, destroys his repose of the night. Rest has to be earned through labour. Or else, you shall have to pass a restless night.

Another thing that happens is: that a man who is comfort-loving, relaxes the whole day and loses his night's rest. Now the more his nights become sleepless, the more he rests the next day in order to make up for lost sleep. Then the more restless his nights become. Then he finds himself in a vicious circle, where rest becomes impossible.

Lao Tzu says: "If you wish for rest, go the opposite way – work hard!" This is because rest and work are not opposite but associated, they are co-operators. The more you toil, the deeper you shall sleep. The opposite is also true: the sounder you sleep, the greater will be your ability to work, "Once we understand this," says Lao Tzu, "then the question remains not of destroying the opposite but of making use of it."

Aristotle says, "Nature causes illnesses, so fight nature." Therefore all of the Western Science is based on fighting nature. Its whole language is of conflict. Bertrand Russell has written a book: "Conquest of nature", It is all in the language of war. Lao Tzu would laugh! He would say, "You have no idea you are a part of nature. How will you win?" What will happen if my hand sets out to conquer me; if my leg wishes to defeat me? It would be rank foolishness. Lao Tzu says, "Nature cannot be conquered because you yourself are nature." He who sets out to fight nature is an integral part of nature himself and so he only succeeds in creating tensions and turmoils within his own self. Live in Nature, do not try to conquer it. Do not fight nature in order to know her secrets. Love her, be absorbed in her and she will reveal all her mysteries.

If the structure of Science is based on Lao Tzu, it will be a different Science altogether. Its language will be one of co-operation, then only can we think in a different dimension. He who thinks in terms of conflict, his logic is always that A is A and B is B and if you want to attain A, you must destroy B, A increases only if B is diminished. So according to him, if you want to be healthy, fight the diseases. Eradicate illness to promote better health.

I was reading the recollections of Rothschilde in which he writes, that he had air-conditioned the whole of his house – even his porch! When he comes home in his air-conditioned car from his air-conditioned office, the automatic doors of the porch open and he steps straight inside his house.

Then gradually Rothschilde found himself suffering from very many illnesses. His doctors advise him to sit in a tub of hot water for two hours daily. So he sits in the tub and sweats himself out. It was then that he realized what he was doing! By being in the air-conditioned surroundings for twenty-four hours he was preventing the body from perspiring. By sitting in the tub his body perspired and he felt hot, then he went again to his air-conditioned rooms and cooled himself! Then when he becomes more cold and cannot perspire, he falls ill. He himself was amazed at what he was doing! The language of conflict is such that it puts us into trouble and perplexity.

Lao Tzu says, ”That which we consider to be inverse and contrary, is not actually so.” If you wish to enjoy the cold, you cannot do so without enjoying the sun. This may seem contrary but I say, Lao Tzu is correct. The cold cannot be enjoyed without the heat and he who has not enjoyed the pleasures of perspiration, is not capable of enjoying the cold weather, for then it will become an illness for him. He who has had the pleasure of the sweat streaking down his face, he alone can enjoy the coolness of the cold. Actually, he who does not know it is to be hot, cannot know what coolness is. This is not opposed to each other, this is conjoined. it is the alliance of both that forms the melody of life.

Therefore Lao Tzu says, ”The concepts of high and low are interdependent.” The notes and sounds of music co-ordinates with each other to create a harmonious melody.

The notes of music, that are inverse and opposite, combine together in harmony and give rise to the best of music, what we refer to as harmony in music, is nothing but a collection of the opposite notes. When we make a noise, then too, we make use of opposite notes just as we do in music. Then what is the difference?

In noise and din, the notes become anarchical. There is no rhythm, no co-ordination between the notes. The same notes combine and co-operate with each other to form the harmony of music. Whether we break this house and make a heap of bricks or whether we lay the bricks in order to build a house, the bricks is the same. So the notes and sounds are the same in music as in the din in the market-place. Then what do we do to create music?

We remove the anarchy. We remove their quarrel among themselves and establish friendship between the opposites. Then those very notes, those very sounds, become uncommon melodies. Now if a man thinks he can produce music with one note only, he is mad! Many notes and many sounds are required to make a harmony sounds that seem contrary and conflicting. Then only is music born.

The Aristotalean concept that has been imbued within our minds since childhood has to be wiped out if we are to understand Lao Tzu. Our gestalt of observing things is always in the opposite. Whenever we see a thing, we at once weigh it in terms of the opposite. Wherever you find a man criticizing you, you at once look upon him as your enemy.

But he could be your friend also. Those who know, will tell you that he is a friend. Kabira says, "Keep your critic near you. Give him a shady place in your courtyard. He is bound to tell you such things about yourself, that no one will ever tell you – least of all, your friends. His remarks will prove useful for your self-perception. His words may etch out the path that leads you to discover yourself. You will do well to keep him with you."

Now Kabira speaks the language of Lao Tzu: Do not hold enmity towards him who maligns you. There is no need. Perhaps his slander may become useful, perhaps his defamation may provide the opposite notes of the melody!

But our nature is contradictory. We not only take a maligner to be our enemy but if someone suddenly praises us, we at once suspect his intentions too! We at once see mal-intentions behind his praise – either he needs money or some other favour!

One of our methods of viewing life is that we stand in opposition to the whole world. Illness is our enemy, death is our enemy, old age is our enemy. All the world and even God, seem to be arraigned against us. We find ourselves all alone in this world, we have to struggle alone in the face of all this! This is one attitude, one gestalt of looking at life.

Another way, another gestalt is, that everything that is: the moon, the stars, the sky and the earth, the birds and the animals, the trees and the plants, the illnesses and the enemies and even death everything is – my comrade, my friend – the very part of my life; I cannot be alive without them. This is another way of looking at life.

For certain the first attitude will cause anxiety. If we have to fight with all the world all the twenty-four hours of the day, life cannot be joyful. And ultimately, the struggle leads to death. Each day, we have to lose: for who has ever won against life? Death comes invariably, old age comes, illness and disease do not spare us, more so when we fight against life. Death will keep coming and we will keep fighting till ultimately we find ourselves completely spent. Then nothing remains of our existence except anxiety.

The science of the West has reached man to almost this condition. Everything has to be fought, everything has got to be suspected and feared. We only fight that, of which we are afraid; and if fight we must, we have to make arrangements for our defence against everything and everybody. Hitler did not marry, for if he did, at least one person would have had the right to share his room! Then if she became unfaithful?

If all the world is a struggle, if there is nothing but enmity, then according to Freud, the husband-wife relationship is also a conflict. This is an expansion of the Aristotalean theory – the entire concept of the West! Freud calls the relationship between husband and wife, as sexual war. There is no element of love involved in it. It is an act of war, where the husband tries to dominate the wife and vice versa. Those who are intelligent give a sophisticated turn to this domination; those who are

uneducated uncivilized, indulge directly into this act of warfare. In both cases, it is a struggle alright. This is one gestalt in which all our relationships follow the same pattern.

It is not that our relationship with nature alone becomes unnatural. When we begin to have a mutilated concept of things there can be no relationships. Then between a father and a son also, the relationship is one of enmity and conflict. Turgnev has written a book called "FATHERS AND SONS". He says in this book that the relationship between a father and son, is always one of conflict. There is no other tie, except the tie of conflict between them. The son is the rightful successor of the father and therefore, is always engaged in removing him. He waits eagerly for him to vacate his position. This is yet another gestalt. If you observe, you will find that everywhere the son is busy trying all means to remove the father from his place of authority. He advises him under many pretexts to hand over the keys and retire from active work. The father in his turn, tries to hold on as far and as much as he can. He takes all precautions not to let the son in. This state of affairs can be clearly observed for this state of affairs, actually exists. The way we have modelled our lives. things are such.

Now this is an intriguing fact, that the father brings up the son, gives him the best he can, only so that he can snatch his position one day! He educates him so that he can take-over his accounts. He looks after his health and saves him from illness, only to snatch the keys away form his hands! The mother is always eager to get the son married. Then the new bride slowly begins to strip her of all her possessions. And then the conflict starts – and continues!

What is the gestalt of our vision?

If we view our life in the language of struggle and conflict, then gradually, these enter into each fold of our existence and in each one of our relationships. Then the person finds himself alone and the whole world stands as one against him. Is it not natural then, when a person stands in conflict against the whole world, that he should be weighed down by a mountain of anxieties? And then inspite of all these anxieties victory is nowhere in sight. The simple reason is, – defeat is the ultimate result. For old age is bound to come, death will overpower him for certain and then – all is lost!

No matter how much the father holds on, ultimately he has to hand-over his possessions to his son. No matter how much the mother objects, the daughter-in-law becomes all-powerful in the house; and no matter what the Guru does, the disciple one day takes his place.

The well-known Sufi saint Byajeed has said, "All whom I taught the art of archery, ultimately made me their target." What he has said is correct. If there is a conflict between the guru and the disciple, this bound to be; for he is preparing the disciple only to take his place some day.

All life is a struggle – to remove the other. All around there are enemies and friends are nowhere. Those who look to be friends are merely lesser enemies. Some are immediate foes some are distant foes. The former are a little thoughtful, the latter are not. The enmity is the constant factor in both.

Lao Tzu based his foundation on a completely different gestalt. Would that his concept came within the understanding of man! Then we would create an entirely new world! He says, "You are not a separate entity. Then where is the question of enmity?"

You are not an individual. You appear so only because you have no idea of the Aggregate. The fact is, wherever there is the individual, he is connected to the Aggregate Whole. The individual cannot exist without the Total Aggregate. You are because everything else is. The tree at your gate is also a part of the reason for your existence.

I here is a story about Lao Tzu: One day one of his disciples was sent by someone to break a few leaves from a tree. He broke a full branch and was taking it when Lao Tzu stopped him. ”Don’t you know you fool,” He told the disciple, ”If any part of this tree is destroyed, you too become less to that extent? When this tree stood before us, full and green, we too in a manner, were also full and green. Today, its wound has caused a scar within us also. We are not apart, we are one.”

But even with full knowledge, we have cut off so many trees!

Lao Tzu objected to a single branch being broken from the tree but we have destroyed full jungles! Now we realise it was a terrible mistake. We had cut off the jungles because we thought them to be our foes. Man was afraid of the wild life they harboured and so destroyed them and built townships. He did not realise that all the rains that poured on his land, all the breeze that blew and cooled the land cannot be without the jungles! If we cut down the jungles our towns will be no more.

All over Europe now, there is a stir against the cutting of trees. It is a crime to break a single leaf for man will fall with the extinction of trees. Lao Tzu said 2,500 years ago that when a tree is denied of a single branch, we too are lessened somewhat, within ourselves. The tree is very much a part of us, a part of existence. It is just as if we were to remove a part of a painting from the main work. It would not then be the same. One single stroke of the brush can change a whole picture. A slight digression changes the total from and hence, all the following connections.

The tree that stood between the hut and the space outside is hewn down. Now the sky and the hut stand bare and naked. We cut down trees unscrupulously in order to clear a good place for man’s dwelling. We have destroyed completely many species of animals also.

This new movement in Europe, is called Ecology, which believes in the interrelationship of organisms with their environment. They say, that man has to suffer because of the things he has destroyed. The birds that sing in the jungles. are equally a part of us. When birds stop singing in the jungles, we shall have created a hindrance in the music that is in nature and then our minds will never know the peace and joy that came with their singing. We are not aware of this for man is a small creature who spends all his life in a corner of his house. He knows not of the vast world outside. He is totally unaware of the clouds that glide in the skies, he does not see the flowers blooming on the trees, nor does he hear the song of birds in the spring.

Three years ago, a book was published in England called ”The Silent Spring”. A sudden drastic change had taken place. Thousands of birds suddenly fell down from trees and died. Thousand other lay dead in the streets of the towns. All spring was suddenly hushed into silence. Due to some fault in the atomic energy research experiments, this catastrophe took place. England lost a major part of her singing birds which will be hard to replace. The spring in England can never be the same.

And we think – what difference will the change in spring make in our lives? Will our roads or our market-places be affected if the birds stop singing in the trees? Would that life were so aloof and

apart! But it is not so. There, everything is joined and inter-connected. If a star becomes extinct, it affects the earth, even if it be millions of light years away.

If the moon is no more there will be enormous changes on earth. There will no longer be waves in the Oceans; the menstrual cycle of women would become erratic. It will not move in a cycle of 28 days, as it does now. Then everything will change. A slight difference – and everything changes.

Lao Tzu says, "Let things be as they are." Accept them, they are your companions. Do not segregate the opposite. That which seems hostile and unfriendly, let even that be where it is, for the pattern of nature is deep and profound and full of mystery. Everything is joined within. You do not know, what problems you create when you set apart a single thing in Nature.

Now as the science of Ecology has begun to spread and man has begun to understand, we have begun to realize how difficult it is to tell in how many ways we are inter-connected. For example: if we cut off trees then the life-elements that the trees gather for us will no longer be. The trees absorb the rays of the Sun and make them fit to be absorbed by our bodies. The direct rays of the Sun cannot be converted into a fit form of consumption for our body. The plants draw the elements from the soil and turn them into food for us. Little do we realize that if the trees and plants had not been there to produce the vegetables we eat, they would be under the soil – a mass of earth! It is the soil below that turns into the food that is capable of being digested by our system.

All the twenty-four hours of the day. you take in Oxygen and throw out Carbon-di-Oxide. The trees take in this Carbon-di-Oxide and take out Oxygen. If the trees of the World are destroyed, how will you escape the poison of Carbon-di-Oxide that you yourself produce? Then the quantity of Oxygen will grow less and less day by day. Ultimately, all life will come to a stop for the trees that give us the life-giving Oxygen, are no more.

Now Lao Tzu had no knowledge of Oxygen. He did not also know what part the trees played in our lives and yet he said – "All things are connected. There is one integrated Existence. The moment you effect the slightest change in the order of things, you effect an equal change within your own selves." There is One Integrated Existence and the Non-Existence is very much a part of it. Everything is connected within this existence – death, illness: everything!

And Lao Tzu says, "If there is the attitude of friendship, of companionship, between the various parts of Existence, if there is the feeling of one-ness with each other, instead of over-powering each other, a wonderful music is created in life." This very music Lao Tzu calls Tao; that very music is Religion; that very music is 'Rit'.

It is now becoming more and more clear that as the understanding of Ecology expands, our understanding of Lao Tzu, will also become more profound. The more we begin to understand the unity within the diversity, the less we shall be in a hurry to change the order of things.

I was reading somewhere the other day, that if we continue to throw oil into the seas, either through the waste-matter from factories or from ships, in sixty years time this oil will cover the surface of the Oceans. Then we shall need no more world wars to finish us, for the life-elements formed by the sea-waters with the help of the sun. will no longer be formed due to the layer of oil.

Now we use detergents instead of soap. The latest discovery of Ecology says that if man continues to use these detergents, he will kill himself. When we wash clothes with soap, the soap gets re-absorbed in the soil within fifteen days. In fifteen days, it is again lost in nature; but detergents take 150 years to be re-absorbed in the elements. So it will be in the soil for 150 years and it will begin to turn into poison within he first 15 years. This means, it will stay in the soil for 135 years, as poison.

The Scientists proclaim that at the rate these detergents are being used in the world today, whatever grows on the soil will become poisonous within the next 50 years. Then you will not be drinking water but poison. Then the Vegetables we eat, will be poisonous. But this understanding we do not have now. We use detergents because soap costs more. It seems alright now – we are being thrifty but remember; whatever we do, is inter-related. The slightest modification causes a great deal of difference.

Lao Tzu was against change of any kind. He used to say: "Accept life as it is. Accept the Opposite also, for there is a secret to it also. Embrace death when it comes. It too, has its secret. Do not fight with life; yield to it. Fall at the feet of Existence – Surrender. Do not enter into any struggle with it.

And it is Lao Tzu's contention that if you surrender whole-heartedly, there will not be trace of anxiety in your life. What worry can surrendered mind have? What anxiety is left for one, who has no enmity with nature? Why should he be afraid to lose when he is not out to conquer? His victory is certain for his defeat is his victory. Lao Tzu's aphorisms all tend towards surrender.

In the last line he says: "... AND THAT BEING BEFORE AND BEHIND GIVE THE IDEA OF ONE FOLLOWING ANOTHER." That which has gone and that which follows, determines our order of things, If that which is no more, does not depart, that which is to come, does not follow. You can understand it this way; an old man in the household dies. Now this we do not connect with the fact that the birth of a child necessitates the death of the old man. But we weep and mourn the death of the old man and rejoice with music when a child is born. We do not see the connection between these two events – that the death of the elder is a preparation for the birth of the younger generation.

We however do not want to part from the old and wish for the young also at the same time. But both these things are not possible. Just imagine what would happen to a household where the elders do not die! In such a family, the children will go mad at their very birth! The presence of even a few ancestors would make the existence of children impossible. As it is, one generation of elders makes things quite difficult for them. All the ancestors with the knowledge of their experiences, would make it impossible for a child to learn anything. They would be knowing so much that there will be no field left for a child to inquire and investigate. They will not allow the child even to stir – they will smother him with their knowledge and experiences, so the poor child is hound to go mad.

It is necessary that the old should depart so that children are ushered in. When children are born, the older generation will depart automatically.

Therefore Lao Tzu says, "All order is inter-connected." If youth comes childhood must depart. When old age comes, youth has to depart. All this is joined, united; but we try to segregate this also. What we like, we strive to save. We try to hold on to youth. When someone asked Bernard Shaw how he felt about his old age. he gave a very singular reply. He said, "When I was young, I wished to remain young always. Now that I am old. I realise that God has wasted energy, by giving it to the

young. Had he given this strength to the old together with their knowledge and experiences, they would have enjoyed it better. He has wasted energy by giving it in the hands of the inexperienced."

But strength diminishes with experiences and the inexperienced are always stronger – this is a secret of nature.

The child has the greatest amount of energy. This old man is the weakest of all. If it was left to us to decide, then like Bernard Shaw, we would want our children to be absolutely weak and the elders to be strong for they are experienced. But the inexperienced child has the energy to develop, to expand – while the experienced old man has none. What is the reason? The reason is significant.

Actually, the accumulation of experiences is the advance of death, Aggregation of experiences means approach of death. It means, life's work is over and one should depart. It is now time to leave the University of Life. So now you need strength no more. No energy is required to go to the grave. You have only to slip into the grave. The inexperienced require strength, for strength is required to gain experience. There will be many omissions and commissions and wanderings on the path. The inexperienced needs strength to fall and rise. The experienced errs no longer, he has a clear cut path before him. On this, he walks and does not falter. He does not require more energy now.

The child has more energy for the full vista of experiences, lies as yet before him. He has as yet to set out to learn. So the inexperienced needs the strength to learn, whereas the experienced knows everything except death.

But we are forever trying to reverse this process of existence. We strive to impart all knowledge to the child long before his time. We try to impose our experiences on him long before he begins to experience on his own. This is never possible. We overlook the fact that nature has its own harmonious method. It has its own process in which that which follows, is invariably connected with that which is past. But we have no knowledge of this.

One man comes and pays reverence to me. Now if I expect reverence from him every day, I shall be wrong. For he who reveres me today creates a great possibility of non-reverence towards me. Non-reverence has also to be fulfilled in the order of totality for life is made up out of the cohesion of the opposites. He who has revered me, will also show non-reverence. Lao Tzu with his profound understanding knows that he who respects him today is bound to revile him tomorrow. But we expect greater respect from one who shows respect towards us and hence find ourselves in difficulty. And we also expect the person who abuses us to do so always. This also is wrong. He who reviles today will revere tomorrow, for the opposites are joined.

I often narrate the story of the Jew fakir Hasid. He was a revolutionary and as was natural, all the priest-class was against him. Hasid wrote a book which he sent to the high-priest of his community. He told the bearer of the book to watch the priest's reaction. He bade him not to speak a word. He was only to witness, watch.

When the messenger reached the high-priest's house, he and his wife were sitting in their garden. He handed the book saying such and such a fakir has sent you this book. The priest had hardly held the book when he flung it away at the mention of Hasid's name saying, "I would not care even

to touch such an unclean book. His wife remonstrated with him. She said there was no need to be so harsh. After all there were very many other books in the house. This one could have also been kept along with them! And if he had to throw it away, he should have waited for the man to depart. There was no need for such uncivilised behaviour! Where was the hurry? He could have thrown the book away later.

The messenger witnessed all this. He thought the wife was a good woman. He went back and told the fakir that the priest was all evil man, and there was no hope that he would ever come to him. But his wife can become interested in him. Hasid told him to recount all that took place without offering his comments. He said, "The high priest flung the book away as if it was poison saying, he would not even touch such an evil book. But his wife remonstrated with him and chided him for his rude behaviour."

Hearing this, the fakir said, "It is possible that there could be some connection between the priest and me sometime but with his wife, never. For he who is filled with so much hatred, how long can he remain thus? Love awaits behind this hatred. It is bound to return. But the wife who talked of propriety and decorum in such an indifferent manner, had no feelings towards me either of love or hate therefore there cannot be any relationship with her. But there is bound to be an alliance between the priest and me. Go back. You shall see the priest reading the book by now."

The man said it was not possible but Hasid ordered him to go. He went back. The door of the house was closed but he saw the priest sitting in the window reading the book!

Life is like that!

He who piles abuses, gathers the strength to love and he who professes love gathers the ability to hate. Such is life. It is a synthesis of the opposites. He who reveres is gathering the strength to revile and he who reviles gathers strength to beg forgiveness. If life is viewed in this way, then the friend is not the friend and the enemy is not the enemy. All things appear in a vast pattern. an enormous gestalt.

When someone comes nearer to me, I know he will go away further. When anyone goes further away, I know he will come back to me. But there is no need to worry in either case for the law of existence is such. When a person is born, it is only to die. If a person dies, it is only to be reborn. If we understand the harmony of the inter-connection of the opposites in this vast law, it will be easier to understand Lao Tzu. This is the meaning of this sutra.

Question 1

QUESTION: MODERN SCIENCE HAS TAKEN THE HUMAN RACE AWAY FROM THE NATURE AND DEVELOPED VERY MANY DIMENSIONS OF LIFE. PLEASE EXPLAIN HOW THE INTRICATE PATTERN OF THE SCIENTIFIC SYSTEM OF LIFE CAN BE BALANCED WITH THE NATURAL LIFE OF THE TAO-AGE?

Bhagwan Sri: It is not a matter of striking a balance, between Lao Tzu and the present day Science. If Lao Tzu's view-point comes within the understanding of man, a completely new Science can come into being. This is because his way of looking at life is entirely different. The Science that developed

on the basis of the Aristotalean theories is incomplete and ignorant. It has tried to discover and understand a very infinitesimal part of life, leaving the greater part of it alone. You may call it childish. It has made no effort to understand the Totality at all. It is also true that so far it could not; now it can.

Alter discovering atomic weapons and developing Atomic-energy, Science will be constrained to revise and reconstruct in its fundaments. You may ask why?

If Science progresses as it has been progressing so far, it can only proceed towards the extinction of mankind. There is no other dimension open to it. Science has to rethink about its old conceptions for now they suspect there is a basic mistake in its very fundaments. They find that all their efforts yield only destructive results. Our efforts to improve life have been herculean but the result has always been the opposite. All efforts lead to pain and sorrow. Therefore Science has to revise its old conceptions.

After all reconsiderations if they discover their fault, they will find it is the error of following Aristotle. Then the Science that is evolved win not be based on possibility towards existence but on co-operation with it. All the bases will change. The science that is based on antagonism towards nature always thinks in the language of destruction. We will understand this better by an example: Take for instance, the mosquito which causes malaria. The Aristotalean Science says, exterminate the mosquito if you want to be rid of malaria. This is the language of destruction. But it is very likely that there is something that is conducive to life that comes with the mosquitoes. If the mosquitos are destroyed, this will stop coming. Mosquitoes can be useful to life in other respects also but this we can only know after their compete annihilation. Then perhaps we shall have to try and replace them again!

If Lao Tzu was faced with the problem of eradicating Malaria, he would never think in terms of destroying the mosquitoes. He would have suggested two methods. He would have suggested a change of attitude towards the mosquitoes or a change in man's physical system to make him immune to malaria. There is no need whatsoever of destroying the mosquito. It is also possible to change the composition of the mosquitoes' body system by which it would not be an enemy of man but rather a friend. Either or both of these methods can be implemented.

If we had followed the Lao Tzu method, we would have worked out an accord between the two. If it is possible to annihilate the mosquito completely, why should it be difficult to annihilate the poison within it? And if the mosquito can be completely destroyed or its poison removed from its system, then there is no reason why man's resistance cannot be built up to withstand the poison of the mosquito? Lao Tzu would definitely be in favour of increasing man s power of resistance.

There are always two ways to any problem. Now for instance, it is sunny outside. One way is, that I use the Umbrella to keep the sun away. In that case, I treat the sun as my enemy and I prevent its rays from reaching me. There is another way also – I can make my body so strong and healthy that it can withstand the rays of the sun. Lao Tzu would say: "Make your bodies strong. Then you will feel the sun to be your friend for it is never so sunny as to be unbearable to a healthy body. The sun seems a foe only to weak and unhealthy bodies.

We should think on the lines of establishing friendship and accord with everything in life. Struggle ultimately leads to suicide. How long will we struggle? The theory of struggle is – to destroy

everything that harms us. Today we destroy the mosquito, tomorrow we find the Chinese are causing us harm. Then why not destroy them? Then we feel the Indians are dangerous – so destroy them... and so on. This is the language of war which is applicable everywhere. Whatever you find harmful, destroy it. America thinks of destroying Russia and Russia thinks of destroying America.

But after the Atomic research, both America and Russia have understood the fact, that this language of annihilation does not hold good any longer. Now neither can destroy the other and save itself. There can only be a period of 10 minutes before the destroyer gets destroyed himself. The aggressor will die 10 minutes after and there will be no time to acclaim victory! Therefore, since the last ten years, America and Russia have began to think in terms of co-operation for hostility has lost its meaning. So now the trend is of co-existence.

It is not, however, enough to think in terms of co-existence only between man and man. Co-existence should be complete. The same principle should hold good vis-a-vis all existence. Our attitude should be one of friendliness even towards disease and illness. Lao Tse's language, is the language of co-existence – towards the Total Existence – . And we cannot differentiate and choose to co-exist with one and not with the other, for if the element of hostility remains, we may become hostile towards those with whom we are in amity.

A new Science will be born – in accordance with Lao Tzu's way of thinking. And if we understand Lao Tzu thoroughly Lao Tzu implies the Eastern mind – the Eastern way of thinking. Aristotle means the Western mind – the Western way of thinking.

We may say, the western way of thinking is Logic and the Eastern way of thinking is Experience. All Science today, stands on the basis of the object. It is research in the field of objects. If ever a science is evolved based on Lao Tzu. Yoga, Patanjali, Buddha, it will be based on the search within the mind of man and never any search outside of him. There can be no accord, no union between these two. If and when the Lao-Tseian Science begins to evolve, the present day science will gradually merge into it, for it is only a part of science. The Science of Experience will be vast and total. This modern science will be absorbed into it and then alone will it attain its worthiness. Then as a part of the whole, it will lose its sting and all that is precious within it, will come to light.

There are many indications now in the West that clearly show the beginning of the onslaught on present day science. Lao Tzu is penetrating from many sides. The meaning of Lao Tzu is – the East. Now there is an architect in America named Wright who has designed a house on the Lao-Tseian style. The whole house is so designed as to look a part of the ground outside and the very mountains and trees around it. Now if a tree comes in the way of his building, Right will not remove the tree, he will rather, shape his building so as to take in the tree as it is. The tree will not be touched at all; it is the house that will be designed accordingly.

If the tree happens to come in the sitting Room, he would so design it that the whole room is in harmony with the tree. So the houses this man builds become a part of nature. Viewed from afar, these houses cannot be seen as such. Lao Tzu feels that houses that stand out are violent. They are violent, like this building 'Woodlands'. If a house goes up to 26 floors, where will the trees be, where will the mountains be and where man? They are all lost! Only the bare building remains. This is unharmonius, grotesque. for there is no co-existence, no harmony with the surroundings. Such a building stands lone and forlorn, in its own arrogance. A house should be such that it is covered

with trees, it is touched by the hills and riders go racing by its compound walls. When someone passes this house, it should not seem so formidable as to give him the feeling of inferiority. He should not feel like a worm before it. If man feels inferior to a thing of his own creation, the result can be dangerous.

The houses created by Wright are such that the gardens, the lawns go within the living rooms. There are trees and plants over-growing on roofs and the house looks as if it has grown out of nature itself. It is not as if it has been constructed. It seems it too, has grown like the trees beside it.

The new architecture of Right has had a great impact on America and Europe. His houses have a unique beauty all their own. There is a rare experience to sit within the shadows of his house. To sit in one of these houses is not to be torn away from nature but to be in the midst of nature. So the Lao-Tseian way of thinking is capturing the Western mind in a thousand ways.

The new poet of today is not concerned about the rhyme or the grammar in his poetry; for Lao Tzu says, does the wind worry about the form and rhythm as it blows by? Or do the clouds consider the alliteration and the cadence of their thunder? And yet there is a rhythm in that thunder – a measureless measure. So this measureless form of poetry, in which there is an inner rhythm but no outward metre, is descending upon the whole of the West and also the whole world. In this poetry, there are no notations, no rhyming verse, no measure, no juggling of words and yet there is a perfect flow within – a stream and in this flow there is a harmonized melody.

There are painters in the West who have stopped putting frames on their pictures; for the frame is nowhere except on things created by man. There is no frame to the sky and the Sun or to the flowers and the trees! There is an endless existence. Things do not seem to be ending anywhere. Everything seems to be continuing on and on. So the painters no longer bind their work in frames. They say that is a man-made thing. Also, it is not necessary that everything should come within the picture. The Lao Tzu type of painting was born in China, thousands of years ago. The Tao School of Painting is a different form of painting altogether. Whenever a man like Lao Tzu appears, all functions of the world begin to take shape according to his concept. So the Lao-Tseian types of painting came into being. These pictures have a charm of their own. These pictures bear no frames, they have no beginning and no end. In life also, there is no beginning and no end. All things are beginningless and endless. Only the things that we make have a beginning and an end. So the Lao-Tseian type of pictures start from anywhere and end anywhere.

This new vogue is now gaining ground in modern art, be it painting or poetry or story-telling. The older stories always started with – ”Once upon a time”, – there was always a beginning and always an end – ”and they lived happily ever after.” Everything was contained in a particular frame-work. The modern stories of today, start from anywhere and end anywhere. In fact, the modern story has a beginning but no end. It is a fragment, for according to the Lao-Tseian Theory, whatever we say, is no more than a fragment; it cannot be whole. We ourselves are not complete. When all things are thus fragmented. incomplete, let them remain so. Do not indulge in the useless task of completing them or else, everything will become ugly and grotesque.

The Eastern mind is penetrating from all sides: through poetry and paintings, through music and architecture and through sculpture; and the Western world is afraid for it is surrounded on all sides. Hermann Hess has written somewhere that soon the Western world will come to know that its

victory over the East was very short lived. But the day the East attacks with all her internal spirit, her conquest will be permanent. Your victory could not be enduring for it was attained by the point of the gun. But if the East choses to attack with all the knowledge of her experiences gathered over thousands of years, she will attack in an altogether different way. Experience and Knowledge, are not aggressive. They penetrate within a person most unobtrusively; and it is permeating within the mind of man already.

The West is besieged on all sides and with every day it realises that all its scales of measurements are tottering. Whatever it had accomplished is shaking now.

And the East is spreading fast as the clouds spread suddenly sometimes in the sky. By and by, it will spread all over the West. This is but natural, for if we see properly, the grasp of the West is entirely superficial therefore its successes are very quick. The grasp of the East is so deep and profound that it cannot succeed that quickly. Remember, seasonal plants blossom in four months, two months, whereas the perennials take years to bloom.

The hold of the East is very deep-seated. Therefore it takes thousands of years before a concept or to gain ground. The hold of the West is very superficial. A single concept succeeds in a hundred years and it is lost also that quickly. But the East can wait. It can wait a long time for the right opportunity.

Lao Tzu is the innermost wisdom of the East. The essence of the East lies hidden in Lao Tzu.

There cannot be an accord? there cannot be an union between the two methods of life-perception. An entirely new science can be born on the concept of Lao Tzu and this birth will take place very soon. There are many things that do not strike the mind immediately. For instance, Euclid's Geometry was the mainstay of the West. All the mathematics involved in Science was Euclidean. No one could have ever dreamt that any non-Euclidean Geometry would one day nullify it but since the last 150 years, non-Euclidean Geometry has come into being which is absolutely Lao-Tseian even though people do not know it.

Euclid says, "Two parallel lines never meet." The non-Euclid Geometry says, "Two parallel lines are already connected." This is a Lao-Tseian sutra that they are already joined. If we keep drawing these lines till the very end, we find that they meet. The trouble is we do not draw them enough. We see them from close quarters, we do not see far enough; but the distant is a part of the near. Now it has been proved that if two parallel lines are drawn out from both sides, till infinity, they meet.

Then Euclid says that no part of the circumference of a circle, can be straight line – how can it be? Any part of a circle is always curved. But the non-Euclidean Geometry says that a straight line is a part of a big circle. If a straight line is drawn out further from both extremities, a circle will begin to be formed. Now this fact is accepted that any straight line drawn on the earth can never be straight, for the earth is round.

For example, I draw a line in this room which appears absolutely straight. Now this line also, is absolutely straight but since the earth is round, this line cannot be straight. It is a part of the wider circle of the earth. All straight lines, when drawn to infinity become circles. This means that all straight lines are parts of a circle. But Euclid said that parts of a circle cannot be straight.

So now we have non-Euclid Geometry in place of Euclidean Geometry!

The basic fundament of the Western Science for the last 200 years, was the factor of certainty. If there is no certainty in Science, what is the difference, between art and science? There must be absolute certitude, then only Science is Science. But now since the last 15 years, a new concept has taken shape – the concept of Uncertainty. As soon as the atom was broken into electrons, it was discovered that the behaviour of these was most uncertain. We can never predict how they will, behave at any given time.

The behaviour of the electrons is like that of a human being. Nothing can be predicted about a man who is genuine – what he would do next, whereas a hypocrite can be well predicted in advance. About him we can easily tell that he will be angry three times in the course of the day, he will smoke six times and so on. Nothing however, can be foretold about an authentic person.

The Authentic man sleeps in the night with his wife and their one-day-old child. Never could have Yashodhara dreamt that he would leave them and go away in the middle of the night! There was no ostensible reason for this man to do so! The authentic man, is unpredictable, independent, the unauthentic is predictable, in other words, a slave.

We were under the impression that matter was predictable, for after all, matter is matter. But now we know that even matter is energy and energy cannot be predicted. So far the last 15 years, the most intensive research in science is on this principle of uncertainty. Now if science also proves to be uncertain, then what is the difference between Science and Art?

Einstein had said in his later days, that very soon, the statements of Scientists will look like the pronouncements of mystics. Eddington has said in his memories ”I used to think that the world is an object. Now as I come to life’s end, I can say, the world is not an object but a thought. It resembles more a thought than a thing.”

There is a great difference between a thought and a thing. If the Scientists say that the world resembles more a thought than a thing then what is the difference between this and the statement of the Rishis who declare ”The world is God?” The Rishis have said that the world is a Soul, a Consciousness. Now Eddington says, ”The world is a thought”, so there is very little difference now between the two.

Science is breaking up in many places. By the turn of this century, it will be gradually destroyed. Its place will be taken by an entirely new consciousness. This new life-consciousness will be one of co-existence and of being one with the vast Totality. It will be a flow of life. It will be spiritual and not material. There will not be a union of the present day science and the new Science. The former must break and fall for it is but a fragment. And the universal spirit will rise from within it. This should be. There is a definite possibility.

Enough for today, the rest tomorrow.

CHAPTER 7

Actionless action and silent dialogue of the wise

25 June 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 2: SUTRA 3

THEREFORE THE SAGE MANAGES AFFAIRS WITHOUT ACTION; AND CONVEYS HIS DOCTRINE WITHOUT WORDS.

Existence is dual. Whatever we do, the opposite also begins to happen simultaneously.

Lao Tzu has talked about Existence in his first two sutras. Now in the third sutra, Lao Tzu says: ”THEREFORE, THE SAGE MANAGES AFFAIRS WITHOUT ACTION.” We shall have to go little deep to understand this.

Now if a sage tells a person that he loves him, he gives rise to hatred also. If he says he works for the good of people, much harm will also follow. If he says, ”I am giving you Truth”, he gives rise to untruth also. Lao Tzu has said in the very beginning that everything is filled with the opposite. Whatever we do, the opposite also takes place immediately. There is no way to escape the opposite. We do one thing and give rise to the other. We try to save one and we harm another. If we save one, we become the cause of another’s destruction.

This duality is the quintessence of all life. So whatever we do, the opposite also happens at the same time. Whether we know or we do not know, whether we recognise this fact or not but it never can be – it is impossible – that we give rise to one and the other does not take place. Therefore Lao Tzu says: ”THEREFORE THE SAGE MANAGES AFFAIRS WITHOUT ACTION.” If they wish you well, they do not actively go about doing so for if they do, they give rise to your non-wellbeing also.

This is difficult, intricate and deep.

Generally we think that if we wish for the good fortune of a person, we have to actively work for his prosperity. If we wish to serve others, we have to actually serve them. But what Lao Tzu explains in his Sutra is that when you serve a person, you will create the mechanism of making him a slave. When you love a person you make arrangements to give rise to hate towards him for hatred is born the moment love appears; and as soon as service is put into action, it becomes enmity. Then what is the sage to do? Is he not eager to serve?

If he is a sage, Lao Tzu says, "HE MANAGES AFFAIRS WITHOUT ACTION." Even when he loves, he does not make his love active. His love will never manifest actively. Leave aside action, he will not even give expression to it. He does not so much as say he loves, for as soon as these words are spoken, a line of hatred is formed around these words.

When I say to someone – 'I love you,' one thing becomes clear that I did not love him before. Then there will be stipulation in what conditions I shall love and in what condition I shall not or whether my love will be unconditional. Words that are expres-sed are never unconditional. Then when I say, 'I love,' I admit I did not love yesterday. Then it will have to be admitted that perhaps tomorrow I may not love.

Around the small island of love there is a boundless ocean of non-love. Actually, my declaration is nothing but an attempt to step aside from this ocean. I light a small lamp amidst the encircling darkness; and the wonder is, the lamp makes the dark-ness more outstanding, more clear, more strong.

In this precious sutra, Lao Tzu says "The love of the sage is not active love," even not so much as to say he loves. His love is inactive. His love is not declaration but his very existence. Love is his very soul. Nay, he is love itself. Therefore, it is not befitting for him to say that he loves. Where there is hate, love can be proclaimed but he who is love incarnate, how will he declare his love? He will never say. He will also not make the effort or the preparation for making love. His love will be a silent manifestation. It will be an unproclaimed presence! A presence undeclared, silent and inactive.

The most wonderful thing about it is, that such love does not create the opposite, that is hate, for that which has not become active, does not enter the world of duality.

Such love is love alone. And such love never ends for since it does not begin in the current of time, it does not end also in time. But such love is very difficult to recognise for we understand words and not action. If a person says he loves you only then do we understand. If someone exhibits his love then we understand. But if the love is inactive, unmanifested, undeclared, it does not come within our understanding. We will not recognise such love when it comes our way. Therefore it is, that the real lovers of the world remains unknown and unrecognised.

Jesus is passing through a village. He rests under a tree. This tree stands in the garden of a famous prostitute of those times – Magdalene. She happens to see him through her window just as he was about to leave. She had seen many men but never a one like him. There is one beauty that belongs to the body and which fades with familiarity. There is one beauty – that of the – soul – that deepens more and more as you come to know it. One beauty is of form, the other is of existence. She herself

was one of the most beautiful women of her time. Kings use to wait at her door. She fell in love with Jesus. She hurried to the garden and stopped Jesus from going and asked him to be her guest.

Jesus replied, "I am well rested now, if ever I pass this way again and I am tired, I will certainly accept your invitation. But now it is time for me to go."

It was a great insult to Magdalene. When kings and emperors became her slaves at first sight, she could not imagine how such a beggarly youth could remain unsmitten by her beauty. Jesus picked up his belongings and prepared to leave. "This is an insult," said Magdalene, "This is the first time, I have ever invited anyone. Can you not show a little kindness towards me by stepping into my house for a moment or two?" Jesus replied, "Think well lady: Do they really love you, who come and profess love to you? Those who did have never loved you. I am the only one who is capable of love. But now it is time for me to depart."

Magdalene could not have understood the above statement of Jesus – that he alone was capable of love. For hundreds of years efforts have been made to find the meaning behind these words What did he mean when he said he was the only one capable of love? If that were so, why did he not step into Magdalene's house and express his love? Besides, the statement itself is very impersonal. Jesus has not said, "Magdalene I love you." He said, "I alone am capable of love." This is not a statement addressed to a person. But people argued that if there was the slightest love within him he would have gratified her wish and gone to her house.

What love was this, when Jesus never again passed that way, nor rested under the same tree, nor go to Magdalene's house? So this statement of Jesus was never converted into action, nor was it a declaration towards some person. Then what did ;t mean? If you understand Lao Tzu you will know what it means. Perhaps Lao Tzu may not have said this much also – that, 'I alone am capable of loving'. For this too, would have been saying too much. Even this much gives rise to a form, a shape. Things get manifested even by this much and enter the flow of time. Lao Tzu would have given no answer. He would have just picked up his bundle and walked away.

Lao Tzu says that as soon as something is manifested, the opposite takes birth along with it. It is just as the voice echoes back from the mountains. You say 'love' here and hate begins to gather there. On one side you say 'pity' and harshness gathers on the other side. So it is with Non-violence and violence. We cannot escape the opposite of whatever we do.

Therefore, a strange thing happens: We are tormented by the very person we love. This should not have been so. But we find that love creates hate no sooner it is born and hate gives pain. Lao Tzu says, "Those who know, those who are wise, they know the secret – when anything is created in Existence, its opposite is also formed automatically." There is no way of escape from it. It cannot be otherwise. This is the rule. Then what do the wise do? How do they go about? They also make provisions for their feelings but in their method, no action is involved.

"THE SAGE... CONVEYS HIS DOCTRINE WITHOUT WORDS." He manifests his personality without actions, he conveys his view-point, his philosophy without words. We shall have to ponder over this; for there has not been a single sage who has not made use of words. But Lao Tzu insists that the sage never conveys his doctrine through words. This can have two meanings: One is, that whoever has spoken was not a wise man; and that we have no knowledge of the real sages. Then it follows that, Lao Tzu, Buddha, Jesus, Mahavira and Krishna cannot be counted among the wise.

The second meaning can be (and that is the correct interpretation) that, whatever Buddha has said does not contain the quintessence of his doctrine. By speaking, he has merely called people towards him. It was only a device to draw those near him who understood only words and not to convey truth. Let us explore this further:

Truth cannot be expressed by words. No sooner a word is spoken about truth is becomes untruth. Therefore all doctrines become disputation – isms.

Then as soon as the spoken truth becomes an exposition, the opposite exposition also comes into being. Then all controversy and disputes, sects and dogmas and all chaos begin. It is possible that when truth is spoken it should give rise to controversy? This cannot be, for the fact remains that truth has never been spoken for it cannot spoken. Whatever has been spoken was a mere device to draw nearer those who only understand the lan-guage of words. Once they come closer, then it is possible to talk to them in silence.

The words of a sage are only an enticement just as we bribe little children with sweets in order to get them to go school. They are given toys to play with so that they may get used to the idea of going to school. The nursery is a playground for the children, there is no hint of studies in it. Then slowly the toys are replaced with books. But these also carry pictures for that is the only way the child can be lured to open a book. Then gradually these are taken away and words are introduced.

In just the same manner when Lao Tzu or Buddha talk, they speak only for those who understand words alone. Then when these people begin to draw near, when they develop the ability to come close to them, when they develop the taste for the company of Sages, then people like Buddha and Lao Tzu begin to go into silence. Then the one who came for the greed of words, leaves with a message from Silence.

The wise have never 'said' anything. This I say, knowing fully well that they have spoken a lot. They have preached people from dawn to dusk and yet they have said nothing about truth. Truth they have only given when the listener became ready to take it in silence. When he develops the receptivity for Truth, when he is ready to take, then only does the sage covey it to him in silence.

The happening of transmission of Truth, always takes place in silence.

Whatever we accumulate is all that is spoken. Therefore Truth is never included in Scriptures. Whatever was spoken was a mere device to attract. It is just as if when we want to conserve a school for posterity, we would save all the toys and playthings. Then after thousands of years we declare that this is what was taught in that school. The fact however is, there were the mere devices to attract the children towards studies. There was no vestige of knowledge in the playthings. They were only an invitation for the children.

We accumulated whatever Buddha or Krishna, Mahavira or Lao Tzu said. But there was no way of conserving what was conveyed unspoken. That which was not spoken, that was conveyed in silence or that which was told without being spoken; and that which was conveyed in the presence of someone, that which was experienced in the nearness and the presence of someone, when each merged into the other like a live – current, that cannot possibly be conserved.

This is the reason why Sages strove for thousands of years not to write the Scriptures. For thousands of years they saw to it that no scriptures was written, in the written word That remains behind for which all this is written, even though it cannot be spoken in words. The empty place slips off; and this is the actual thing. Therefore nothing was written for thousands of years. The Vedas are only 5,000 years old, though they were in existence for more than 90,000 years. It cannot be that the Sages of yore did not know the art of writing or that they did not know how to convey the message of the Vedas. This is impossible.

For 90,000 years the Vedas were not written. They were knowingly not written – Why?

Direct transfer is possible from one person to another, for the person concerned can give words as well as his silent Presence. The book can never give the silent Presence. The book is an inert thing. Also, the book can fall into the hands of one who knows nothing and then the ignorant person quickly develops the illusion of being wise. It is not bad to be ignorant but it is very dangerous when the illusion of wisdom develops in an ignorant man.

For then, the doors to knowledge close. This is why, for thousands of years the Sages insisted that the Vedas be not written. Whatever the sage knew. he transmitted to the person who was qualified to know. As long as the disciple was incapable of knowing, the sage used words and as soon as he developed his capability, the sage spoke to him in silence – he conveyed in silence what was to be conveyed. As long as a person was not qualified to receive in silence, he was made to understand explicitly that nothing has been conveyed to him. He should know that only superficial knowledge has been given to him and the real Truth has not yet been conveyed. He should be detained till such time as he becomes qualified, lest he goes away with the illusion of having gained knowledge.

From the day that books began to be written, there have been less men of wisdom and more men of knowledge. And then this tradition of live-transmission almost came to an end, for the written book catered to the very few. It was only when books began to be printed that they came within the reach of the masses. Then all that was significant gradually began to be lost for lack of the personal and direct touch of the Master.

Lao Tzu speaks in the period when THE WISE CONVEYED THEIR DOCTRINES WITHOUT THE USE OF WORDS. This should be understood from different angles.

As we go back in history, we shall find that Sadhana is not learning or scholarship. Sadhana is a practice to go into silence whereas scholarship is a study of word accumulation.

Buddha left his house and went away in search of Truth. He went to each and all who knew. To each one he said: ”I have come in search of Truth. If you have knowledge of the highest truth, please tell me.” Wonderful people these were! Those who did not know, admitted openly: ”We have no knowledge of the Ultimate Truth. We know only the Truth expounded by the Scriptures and that we can tell you.” And Buddha replied, ”I have no use for the Scriptural truths.” In that case,” they said, ”you will have to go elsewhere.”

Then Buddha approached those who taught him Sadhana. He stayed with one teacher for three years and practised all that he taught. In the end he asked the Guru if he had anything more to teach or whether there was any fault in his Sadhana. The Guru replied there was no error on his

part nor any lack of sincerity. ”But”, said Buddha, ”I have no knowledge of Truth!” ”As much as I know, I have given unto you. I too have no knowledge of the Primal Truth. Now go to someone who knows. Seek elsewhere!” the Guru told him. For six years Buddha went from place to place learning and imbibing all that other Teachers taught. He never questioned will he learnt all that the Guru had to teach.

Three years he spends with one Teacher. When the Guru said he had nothing more to teach, Buddha said he had no knowledge of Truth yet. He could have easily asked in the very beginning whether this man could reveal the ultimate Truth! Where was the need to waste three precious years and then ask?

The actual question is not whether anyone has the knowledge of the Supreme Truth but of first making oneself fit and worthy. Therefore it is that Buddha asked after three years, when he felt his worthiness to ask the question. When the Guru himself said he had nothing more to impart, it was then that Buddha said he had no knowledge of Truth after all his teachings. He begged to know if there was any laxity on his part that had withheld the knowledge from him. The Guru assured him that he had worked with all zeal and sincerity but alas, he had no more to give! He had taught him all that he knew. Now to seek further he would have to go elsewhere.

Buddha went to all the Gurus and all the Scholars of the Shastras but he did not find Truth. Then he set out alone by himself. But before this, he knocked at each and every door! Remember, he alone can set out on his own, who has walked with many. It is only after travelling with others on many journeys and reaching nowhere that a person sets out on his own. All around us there are many who know. It is worthwhile to go as far as they can take you. It is dangerous and harmful also, to be alone before this. This experience is very necessary in order to set out on one’s own.

So Buddha sought out each Guru who took him as far as he could. Buddha thanked them for having taken him that far and went further. When he experienced the ultimate Truth, he said ”At first I used to wonder whether those who helped me on my path were keeping something away from me. But now I can say, they hid nothing. Actually the thing about the Ultimate Truth is, that no other can give it to us. Also, I could not receive it from somebody because my silence was not strong and capable enough to take it. I asked in words, they replied in words. When someone enters the absolute silence, only in that state can Truth be revealed to him.”

Lao Tzu says, ”THE SAGE PERFORMS NO ACTIONS.” This does not mean they do nothing. Do not make this mistake. Non-doing does not mean idleness. It is not that the sage does nothing. It means something very different. It means: the sage arranges his actions by non-action.

If a father is really respected and honoured by his son, (and then alone he is really a father) then his son should find no discomfort and hesitation to sit before him. The father has not to thump the stick to proclaim: ”Here I come – attention!” His presence should be enough to bring about the necessary arrangement. He should not even be aware of the difference. He comes and his presence should bring about a befitting change.

If the father is a little weak perhaps he has to convey his presence through his eyes. But even then he is a powerful father, who brings about the necessary changes with the flicker of an eye. It is difficult to find even such a father nowadays. This father however, is a weak for his mere presence

is not enough. He has to act through his eyes to make his presence felt. Then there is yet another weaker father who has to announce his presence. "Here I am be silent and sit respectfully!" Even he is an effective father, for the like of such as he is also difficult to find – he says and he is obeyed. The greater possibility these days is that the father says and no one listens.

Someone asked of Nasruddin, "You have seven sons. They must be troubling you a lot." Nasruddin said, "Never, my sons have never troubled me. Only once did I have to raise my hand in self-defence. After that I have had no problems. Now I do not do any such thing by which that situation could be repeated."

The father says. "I avoid my sons! I take care not to cross their path!" There are fathers yet weaker who say a thing fifty times and to no effect. Even then he is eager to pass his orders for the fifty first time!

The same applies in the case of the sage. The sage conveys without action. His very presence brings about the necessary conditions. He does not go into action for action is a substitute for wisdom. When wisdom is not. then action has got to be employed.

Hence, another mystery becomes clear. The more you look into the history of the past, the more actionless will you find the wise man to be. You find him sitting in his hut or in the jungle. His presence alone brings about the necessary conditions. Even the King comes running to him for advice and sits at his feet! The Kings and emperors were eager and desirous that the sage should stay within their Kingdom. Their very presence was enough for them.

Then as we go forward in history, we find that the sage enters into action. Buddha and Mahavira also do not look very active to us. If they were to be born in our times, we would tell them to do some social work – work in hospitals, open schools – do something! Do something! – start the GARIBI HATAO (Remove Poverty) Movement! Where is the sense in sitting doing nothing? Buddha would have to face greater difficulties today and Lao Tzu should not even dream of being born into the world of to-day! God knows what work we would tell him to do!

Those whom we look upon as Mahatmas today, are no Sages. His title of 'Mahatma' depends on what work he is doing and not purely on his personality. His being a Mahatma depends not on his being but on his doing. The question today is not what he is but what he does – what is the distinction of his work?

If today we question: "What did Lao Tzu do?" We shall get no details of his work. His life was completely devoid of action. If we judge action-wise, then a mere village-hand of today, does much more than what Lao Tzu did. But in the olden days, this question was never asked. He was never asked what he was doing; rather, he was asked – what he was. And it is a well-known fact, that when such a great spiritual power descends on the earth, things happen by themselves, they have not to be done.

If Lao Tzu is present in this village – that alone is enough. Whatever could be possible for that village, happens by his mere presence. He who has to perform actions, is a weak sage. The presence of the sage is action itself. It is just as in the mere presence of the magnet, the iron-pieces are automatically drawn towards it. If the magnet has to make an effort to draw each piece towards

itself, it is not a genuine magnet. The power of the magnet lies in its very being. Its very presence creates its field and whatever comes within that field is automatically drawn towards it.

Whenever Buddha sat, a magnetic field was created and things began to happen within it. There are stories (and there now remain merely stories) that wherever Buddha stayed, there used to be no thefts in that village. It was not that Buddha taught the thieves to give up stealing. There were no crimes – not that Buddha exhorted the people to take vows not to kill. His presence alone brought this about. And Buddha knew that if his presence did not bring about an effective change in the people, his words never would. When Existence fails to work what call words do? If my being is not efficacious, what can my proclamations do? Existence is a very powerful thing, and if Existence itself is proving useless of what use will my shouting be? If Buddha stands before a thief and the thief's tendency to steal does not fall, of what use will Buddha's preachings be to this man? If Buddha's being cannot stop him from stealing, then are his words greater than his being that they would more effective?

Now see it from another angle: If Buddha were to beg on his knees and tell the thief not to steal, then is his action greater than his being Buddha? No. What Lao Tzu says, "There is nothing greater than Existence." There is nothing greater than our very being. Actions etc., are all small and superficial things. If the quintessence of the Spirit cannot do anything, nothing else can.

Lao Tzu says, "Therefore, you create one and the opposite is born." Therefore, the sage arranges his work without involving action in his manner and transmits his philosophy in silence. What they have known, they convey in silence and what they have lived, they spread through their presence. This a very silent and serene happening. The sage moves about as if he were naught as if he does not exist.

It is an interesting fact that nothing is known of Lao Tzu s death. No one knows when he died, where and how he died. There is however a popular story that the last man to see Lao Tzu, asked him where he was going. Lao Tzu replied, he was returning to where he came from. The man said however, "But people will worry about you; where you have gone and what happened to you?" Lao Tzu said, "When I was born, I was ignorant. So there was a little noise about my birth. Now that I have attained wisdom, there shall be no sound about my death.

"The happening of death will not take place, in a way, in my case. There shall be no account of my death in the world of happenings for the sage lively silently and departs in silence."

And thus he departed-silently.

All that the people know was, that Lao Tzu was and is no more. The happening of death did not take place in the sense that no one saw him die. His last words to some traveller were: "Now I have attained wisdom, therefore, my death shall produce no sound." When the Void walks, there are no signs of its foot-steps, when the Void walks, there are no signs of its foot-prints – as the birds fly in the air and leave no trail behind them.

It is difficult to explain in words this statement of Lao Tzu! that the sage performs his task without action. Actually, the sage makes no active effort to manage his affairs. Things get conducted by themselves. So instead of saying that: THE SAGE MANAGES AFFAIRS WITHOUT ACTIONS, it

would be better to say that affairs are managed without action. The work of the sage is conducted without any action on his part. Knowing this, he has not to do anything consciously. He does nothing for the simple fact, that the illusion of doing falls with the ego. As long as the 'I' exists, the doer exists; till then the feeling of 'I am doing' persists.

And the irony is, that I declare the doer-ship of things that I do not do at all! And as long as the ego exists, I shall insist that I perform these actions. I say, "I breath, I live, I am ill, I am healthy, I am young, I am old" – as if I bring all these actions about!

Ego attaches every action to itself.

The sage's ego drops completely and therefore his each action is in unison with God. So it is the Universal Spirit that works through him. He becomes the medium for the Supreme Power its vehicle. Then it is God that makes him stand, it is God who makes him sit; then it is God who walks and speaks or becomes silent in him.

Therefore the Rishis of the Upanishads never attached their names to their teachings. We have not been able to connect the Vedas with any person. Rather we have always known that they are not the creation of a human mind. This has however, given rise to many foolish conjectures also. People began to say that God himself wrote the Vedas. The actual fact is, those who wrote the Vedas were very much human but they did not understand themselves to be the originators. Their ego was completely annihilated and hence they had no cause to feel themselves as the writers of the Vedas. If such a person was questioned, he would say, "God makes me write," or "God writes." It is because they were completely oblivious of the feeling or doer-ship due to the extinction of ego, that they could say that the Vedas are not written by man, that the Vedas are the work of the Divine.

Whenever there has been a revelation of the highest Truth in the world, it has never been through a mortal being. Whoever revealed them, had no idea of doer-ship. And wherever the doer is conscious of his action, truth becomes changed and deformed; then beauty turns into ugliness and love into hatred.

Lao Tzu says that the sage performs no action nor conveys his message through words and yet he works. Lao Tzu stands, sits, he walks, he sleeps, he begs for alms and goes from place to place. If anyone asks of him he gives him knowledge. Lao Tzu accomplishes all tasks but he does not delude himself that he is doing something for the world. Let us try to understand this further:

Whenever some one asked Lao Tzu, "You eat, sleep, you walk and talk, you even explain to people, then actions you do perform!" Then Lao Tzu would reply, "My actions are like the dry leaves of a tree. When the wind blows east, they go east, when the wind blows west, they go west. When the whirlwind whirls them up into skies, they fly high up in the air; and when the wind is silent, they drop to the ground.

"I drift in the air like a brown leaf; let the wind take me where it wills let it take me high in the sky, I am not swollen with pride that I have attained great heights. Let it drop me to the ground, I do not sit to weep that I have been slighted, insulted. When the breeze lifts me up into the air, I take the pleasure of floating in the skies and when it throws me to the ground, I delight in complete relaxation. When it takes me East, I go East; when it takes me West, I go West. I have no direction of my own. I have

nowhere to go. And I have no reason to annoy the wind either! That could only have been, if I had a will of my own. Then I could have directed the wind where to go but I have no desire of my own."

Lao Tzu says, "I am not the doer of whatever is happening. Things are happening by themselves. And therefore let the result be what it will, I am not interested," If people understand him, it is alright, if not, it is still alright by him. He is not out to convince people. Understand the difference: A Mohammedan friend came to see me the other day. He said, "Why are there less numbers of Hindus if Hinduism is the highest and oldest religion on the earth? What is the reason that there are more Muslims, more Christians?" I said, there was a reason for this.

The Rishis who laid the foundation of the Hindu religion always said, "Who are we to convince others? Who are we to convert others, to coax others, to leave their faith and embrace ours? We are nobody." When a person went to Patanjali or Yagyawalkya, all his questions were answered by the sage but there the matter ended. There was no give and take whether the man was convinced or not was immaterial; nor did the sage care whether he became his follower. The sage for himself, is a total Void – he is naught. Then where is the question of anyone following him? Someone raises a question, if the answer rises within the sage gives; if it does not, he remains silent. There also, is not the attitude that 'I have given the answer'.

It is not necessary that you will get an answer to your question from Lao Tzu. Lao Tzu will say, "If the answer comes, I shall give. If it does not – forgive me." Many a time people felt themselves in difficulty with Lao Tzu. Someone walks many miles to put him a question and Lao Tzu says, "Friend, the answer won't come!" The man pleads, he has came a long way but Lao Tzu pleads his inability to answer, if the answer will not rise within. At the most he would advice the man to tarry a little. Then if the answer came, he would give it. If it did not, he was helpless.

There is no attempt at conversion. The sum rises – let the flower bloom if it will or let it not. The sun will not be blamed for the buds that did not open; nor will he be praised for those that did. The sun is not responsible. His task is to rise every morning and set in the evening. Let the flowers bloom or not, it is entirely their look-out. The sun comes and goes.

So also do people like Lao Tzu – they come and they pass away. They make no arrangements, they give no message. Yet if someone is ready for it, he gets the message. If someone wants to establish himself in the Self, it can be brought about in the presence of such a one. But these are all happenings that cannot be directed. These are innate and spontaneous happenings.

This Sutra is difficult to be grasped by our understanding. for we have in our lives, never performed an action-less action or spoken in speech unsaid. Therefore it is difficult to fit these within the dimension of our experiences. But I say unto you that if you experiment, you will find that this has begun to come within your understanding.

For instance, if you wish that there be peace in your house – hold, do not go about organising peace. Just become tranquil yourself. Then even if there are ten members in the house-hold, you will gradually begin to feel an uncommon harmony pervading in the family. We know not from what unknown paths and unfamiliar openings peace permeates within; and it is the same house where the only cure for restlessness was more restlessness and disquietude. Within a year's time the house will be a heaven of peace. And you have actually done nothing! Or whatever you have done, you did within yourself.

A tranquil person begins to create vibrations of peace around him. A restless person likewise, radiates vibrations of chaos, and confusion around him. Now Scientists have evolved machines to gauge whether a man radiates peace or chaos. Machine can measure the wave-lengths of the rays emanating from the person standing before it and each wave-length denotes the type of a particular radiation.

Now if this man, who is being tested, is told that his wife has run away with the neighbour, the machine will at once record the change in his radiation; for now this man is seething with rage there is fire within him. Or if you were to tell him that he has won a lottery, again there is a change in his radiation. The wave-lengths of these radiations can be studied and the internal condition of the individual can be correctly assessed.

The human body is a radiator. We are each a small nucleus which throws out thousands of kinds of rays. Now the most interesting thing is that when we throw out these rays and they are reflected back to us from another person, we feel it is this other who is venting wrath on us. Now if I emit around me such rays as are reflected back to me as anger, I will feel it is that other person who is angry with me. It will never occur to me that whatever I do with my person is such that it turns into anger when it returns from the other person. But this is what we all do! And when everyone does the same thing, then there are ten members in a family, the anger is not only ten times mole but is 10 x 10 more. Then there is no end to the confusion they cause as These rays are thrown from one to the other. They form an intricate net-work in which the same kind of rays cross and re-cross each other and within this we all live. And then we set about redressing our ills!

This tormented man, filled with confusion and turmoil, then sets about finding remedies for peace and creates more confusion in the bargain.

Lao Tzu says, ”Be at peace and peace will spread all around you.” And yet it is not inevitable. A person sitting at Buddha’s feet can contemplate murder. Buddha’s step-brother who stayed for years with him was always planning to kill Buddha. He made a thousand schemes to destroy Buddha.

Buddha sits at the foot of a hillock and this man rolls stones from the top. Now when Buddha is in meditation, peace should radiate around him. If this does not happen around Buddha, where else will it happen? But this man, Devadatta sends boulders rolling on to him! Buddha passes by on the road, this Buddha who is absolutely desireless who would feign hurt even a flower, and this Devadatta arranges to let loose a mad elephant – And he is his brother! Then the question arises – what is the reason? If there were waves of bliss and tranquility emanating from Buddha, what was happening to this man?

But tranquility also spreads only if you are receptive or else. it cannot penetrate within you. You are at liberty to keep your doors closed. You have that much freedom. You can live with the poison within you. You can put up your umbrella even when it is raining nectar. Keep this in mind when this is being said.

A sage with Lao Tzu’s understanding, will be tranquil on his path and will emit rays of tranquility. Yet only those who are receptive will be affected by them and those who are not, will remain unaffected. Under no circumstances however, will Lao Tzu be a partner in their non-tranquility. This could only be, if he were throwing rays of non-tranquility. Now at least, he does not increase their restlessness.

If a person is non-receptive to his rays of tranquility, his non-tranquility does not increase in the presence of such a person. And this is not less, even this is a great thing. The sum total of its collective effect will be tremendous.

It is very recently that we have come to know by the explosion of the atom, of the boundless energy that is contained in the ultimate particle of matter. It was beyond our imagination that a single atom would contain so much force, for we always thought that strength can only be in the big and strong – what power can there be in that which is small? We always equated power with the massiveness, the bulk of a thing. The smaller a thing, the more insignificant and weak we considered it to be. But the truth is the opposite. The more subtle a thing, the more powerful it is. Power lies in the subtle and never in the mass. The greatest power resides in the subtlest thing. And that which is the Void, is the measureless store of energy, where there is in-calculable power. The energy increases as the thing becomes more and more subtle till ultimately the Void is reached, which is absolute power.

When a sage becomes totally void, actionless: doing nothing saying nothing; when there is no movement in him, no tremor and he is absolutely still, void, he becomes the store-house of the absolute power. This absolute power then begins to take effect in several forms; it evolves many methods and regulations. Many lives change in its presence and its effect is felt in distant places. At times the effect lasts for thousands of years.

Just now I told vou about Devadatta. the step-brother of Buddha. He stayed for years with Buddha and yet was forever evolving ways and means to kill him. On the other hand, there are people, who even after 2,500 years are filled with joy at the very mention of Buddha's name – -some unknown door opens within them. Even after 2.500 years the rays of the Buddha still penetrate within them. This is because no radiation is ever lost in the Universe. Whatever is contained in the Universe is never lost. The rays that diffused from the heart of Buddha, are spreading every where even today. And if a heart opens to them they immediately penetrate within even today.

Not Buddha alone but all those who have known as Buddha, their rays too are scattered in a like manner. And all Those who have not known, their rays also pervade the skies.

When you think of murder you are not alone. The vibrations of all the murderers of the world become available to you. Remember, in this world, never has a man committed murder by himself alone nor has a man ever attained the Supreme Knowledge all by himself. Whenever a person becomes restless to attain the Universal Wisdom, the strength and power of all saints and sages flow towards him. When a man becomes ready to kill, the strength of all the murderers – those that were, those that are and those who, will be – flows towards him they become a hollow, a pit. This is why a criminal and a sage say the same thing: The criminal always wonders after the act, how he could possibly have done it. He cannot imagine ever having planned the murder.

There is a little truth in this statement. It is a fact that the thought of murder came to him but at the time of killing, the waves he received of strength came from multitudes of murderers, past, present, and future.

This is exactly why a sage also never says that he has attained knowledge although he did make an attempt, he did practise sadhana, he did make a resolve, he did surrender; but when wisdom dawns on him, the strength and power of all the sages are at one with him. We do not exist in this world as an indi-vidual. Rather, we exist as a small drop in the vast net-work of humanity.

This is why Lao Tzu says ”Everything becomes silent. Silence also conveys and there can be actionless action.” The individual is an atom of consciousness just as science has discovered the atom to be the ultimate particle of matter. We have to go within the individual and this going within is what is called religion. All the sutras of Lao Tzu point to this alone: that we should go within.

We say ”Things do not happen by action, they happen by our very being.” But actions are on the periphery whereas being is within. Doing is outside whereas being is inside. So Lao Tzu says, ”You become immaculate and purity spreads all around. Do not try to purify others.” What he means is ”Go within.” He says, ”You will not be able to express truth in words, you can only express it in silence – ’no-word’. But words are without and the No-word state is within. So what he implies is to go within. All his effort, all his suggestions and indications are towards the inward journey.

When a person travels within and reaches, he attains the atom which is the atom of consciousness that atom of spirituality. Its power is vast and boundless. This very atom of consciousness, is what we call God. As soon as we reach there, the power becomes so great that then the power alone works. Then we have not to work separately on our own. It would seem odd if we were to say that in this world only the powerless work. A powerful person’s being is enough to bring the necessary work about. In this world those who do not know, achieve a little by effort alone. Those who know, achieve everything effortlessly. Those who know, speak even in silence and those who do not, are unable to convey anything even with the help of thousands of words.

This sutra of Lao Tzu, is very subtle. He was a very subtle person himself. Whatever he says appears very small on the surface. It was only this morning that a friend came and said, ”Today’s sutra is very short”. It is not a short sutra, it is very big. And though it is expressed in a simple line, it contains all the Vedas within it. All the religious teachings, all that the sages have ever said, is contained within this small sutra. If the whole of TAO-TEH-KING is lost and only this short sutra remains, the one who knows will seek out the rest of the book with the key of this one-line sutra. This is enough. Therefore let me repeat the sutra once more, then you may ask questions. ”THEREFORE THE SAGE MANAGES AFFAIRS WITHOUT ACTION AND CONVEYS DOCTRINES WITHOUT WORDS.”

If there are any questions left with regard to this sutra, let us take them up now. We shall have to have another sitting tomorrow as one more sutra still remains.

Question 1

QUESTION: BHAGWAN SRI, FROM LAO TZU’S ELUCIDATION OF THE ORIGINAL ADVAITA MONO-THEIST PHILOSOPHY, IT IS CLEAR THAT HE HAD ATTAINED THE SUPREME KNOWLEDGE. THEN WHY IS IT THAT VERY FEW PEOPLE FOLLOWED HIS PHILOSOPHY AND TREAD ON THE PATH HE SHOWED? IS NOT THIS FAILURE TO GAIN FOLLOWERS, A BITTER CRITICISM OF HIS VIEW-POINT? AND IF MANY FOLLOWED ARISTOTLE, IS THAT NOT THE PROOF OF THE EXCELLENCE OF HIS SCIENCE? PLEASE ENLIGHTEN US ON THIS.

Bhagwan Sri: Very few people know Lao Tzu. The higher the peak, the lesser will be the number of eyes that can see it. The greater the depth, the lesser will be the number of those who dive to the bottom of it. The waves of the ocean are visible to the naked eye, not so the pearls within the ocean. The depth of Lao Tzu is the depth of the ocean. Some rare diver alone can reach it. The

world is not made of divers; the world moves on those who span the waves by making boats. Man travels from one shore to another; he has no use for the ocean's depth. So he creates the science of making boats and primarily such science is significant.

Therefore Aristotle became so significant. His logic proved useful to the world. It was proved harmful in the long run but it seems very gratifying in the beginning. The core may be poisonous but the upper crust is sweet. You see, it is easier to under-stand Aristotle because Aristotle's sutras show the way to obtain power. Lao Tzu's sutras show the way to obtain tranquility. Peace, tranquility however, is the ultimate form of energy whereas power alone in its ultimate form is nothing more than restlessness.

This is not so though in the initial stages.

Walk on the path of Aristotle and it will lead you up to the atom bomb. The path of Lao Tzu leads you not to the atom bomb but up to Lao Tzu alone. So for those who wish to travel, Aristotle is the answer for they will be reaching somewhere or the other always – to the moon and then further and further! Those alone. however, can tread the path of Lao Tzu, who do not want to travel at all. They can reach up to Lao Tzu alone and not up to the moon or some other star or the atom bomb – nowhere else.

Besides, there is the desire, the ambition for power within all of us. We desire wealth, power, status, fame, pride, egotism. If we hear Lao Tzu, we will run away as fast as we can for he talks of snatching all these away from you. Lao Tzu offers us nothing; rather he takes everything away from us. But we are beggars. We are out to beg. We cannot stand a second before Lao Tzu, for fear he might snatch even our begging bowl away!

There is a story about Diogenes. It is said he used to go about with a lantern in the streets of Athens, even in the bright day light. When asked what he was looking for, he would reply "I am looking for an honest person." For many a year he went about like this. Then when someone questioned him whether he has succeeded in his search, he replied, "Is it less that I have yet got my lantern with me? Many tried to snatch even my lamp away from me."

When a person is prepared to lose all, then only can he approached Lao Tzu. how many are prepared to lose? Everyone is ready to snatch. So the science of snatching evolved from Aristotle's theories. This is why the East was conquered. It could not produce an Aristotle and so it remained a slave and bore a lot of trouble and harassment for a long time. The East could not create a Scripture of extortion. But who can tell who stands to gain ultimately – the East or the West?

What is spread over a long time, is difficult to gauge The initial successes cannot decide anything. Things change at the second step and by the time the end is reached, everything can change. And it is bound to change. It seems the East has suffered a great loss. If however, the East stands confidently by Lao Tzu and Buddha, the West will come to understand its foolishness. What it had snatched were mere toys that hardly made any difference What it had lost. it would realise, was its very soul. What the East had lost, was a mere toy and what it had retained was the soul. If the East stands firmly by Lao Tzu, it is bound to be victorious.

The name of Lao Tzu reached only to a very few: and the reason for that is no one wants to go up

to Lao Tzu. If we chance to meet him, we will try and avoid him, we will say – "Not now, later; when the time comes, we shall come to you. As yet we are seeking worldly wealth."

This is one reason. Another reason is, what Lao Tzu says is a different matter altogether. There are two types of knowledge in this world. One is that which comes within the understanding of the very common man. The other type is such that unless the person changes completely, it cannot come within his understanding. The former is the very preliminary knowledge that is directly understood by the most primitive of men, who are almost like animals. No training is required, his very instinct tells him what is what.

Then there is the other type of knowledge which does not come within the understanding of a person unless he is fully learned and transformed. And Lao Tzu's knowledge is not for the simple man. The man must be transformed, that is to say, a certain alchemy has to be passed through. Then only can Lao Tzu be understood. Otherwise, he cannot be understood.

It is like this: Supposing we tell a little child to pick out red and green pebbles. he will do so. But if you tell him to pick out the diamonds, he will find it difficult. To discern the diamonds, the child will have to wait. It is very likely otherwise, that the child might throw away the diamonds and preserve the stones. The diamond has to be prepared and its hidden lustre has to be brought out. Many a time the diamond in its original state looks worse than an ordinary stone. After a great deal of effort, it appears in its full lustre. So the child will he unable to discern. The child has also to prepare in order that he may be able to discern and discriminate.

Lao Tzu talks of diamonds, of maturity. When a person becomes mature, he is able to understand Lao Tzu, whereas a school-going child's intelligence is adequate enough to understand Aristotle. He requires no special qualifications. Even up-to-date, the human race has not reached the stage where greater number of people can understand Lao Tzu. Even now, only one in a million can understand him.

Remember all that is significant in life, is aristocratic, whatever is excellent, is majestic; it can be understood by a few only. Knowledge has its own conditions. It climbs down for nobody; rather, you have to reach up to it. Lao Tzu will not step down for you; you will have to climb up for him.

Knowledge is all ascent – a steep ascent. Science can be achieved right where you are. Knowledge is achieved only when you proceed forward. Therefore, it is true that very few understand Lao Tzu. But those who have understood, were most excellent flowers of wisdom. Aristotle is useful for everyone but those who followed him, are not the flowers of humanity.

The deeper the knowledge the much earlier it dawns – much before its time. For instance, what Lao Tzu has said it will take another 2,500 years to become contemporary. Then people will understand him right from where they are.

Let me put it this way, it will be easier to understand. A man composes a poem. If his poem is easily understood by all it will not remain in vogue for long. The poem that is not understood by all except those who are at the top, endures for thousands of years. A Kalidas endures for thousands of years. A film song lasts for hardly a month or two, though it is understood by all. Its tune catches on immediately. From village to village, from field to field, from every street and by-lane, its melody

spreads. The young and the old sing it alike and yet suddenly we find, it has disappeared. It is never heard of again! What is the reason?

It was understood by all because it was the level of the intelligence of the masses. Therefore it could not exist long. But when a Song is really created, tit takes years to decipher its meaning. Many a time, it is understood long after the poet's death.

Soren Kierkegaard wrote books. During his life-time, no one heard of them. he was able to publish only one book of which only five copies were sold and these too, were bought by his friends. he lived all his life on the money his father left him for, for all the twenty four hours he was engrossed in his thoughts, in his search; where was the time to earn a living? Every first of the month, he would go to the bank and draw some money on which he lived the entire month. Then one day he was told that the money has finished. Soren fell down at the door of the bank and died, because there was no hope of money coming from any other source.

For a full hundred years, no one remembered Soren Kierkegaard. no one knew either his books or even his name. Now since the last 30-40 years, he has been rediscovered. Today it can be said that the West has been greatly influenced by Soren Kierkegaard. People say, it will take hundreds of years still, to understand Kierkegaard well. But in his life-time, people of his village laughed at him. People used to deride him for wasting his time. They advised him to do some useful work and earn a living.

The pictures that Vincent Van Gogh created. are now valued in millions but Vincent in his lifetime, could not sell a single one. If he took a cup of tea from a tea-shop, he gave a painting in return for he had no money. He would barter his paintings for a packet of cigarettes. Sixty years after his death when his genius was discovered people delved in to their junk-yards to take out his paintings. Some paintings were recovered from a tea-shop, some from a hotel where he must have had a meal. All these owners of his paintings became millionaires.

Each painting drew a sum of five lacs of rupees. Today only 200 of his paintings are available. Vincent Van Gogh was a painter of the highest calibre in the history of man. But it is now that he is acclaimed. In his life-time he went hungry three days in a week. His brother sent him money from which he ate four days in a week and spent the three days allowance to buy painting requisites. He was on the verge of death by the time he was 32 for how long could he continue like this? So he shot himself.

He wrote before he died that now it was no use living any more. He had created what he wanted to create. His work was done, so why should he be a burden on his brother? He had to provide funds for his meals after all, and now that he had achieved what he was striving for since a year, his work was done.

Now such people live on a different plane altogether. When the human race reaches that level, then only are these people appreciated and rediscovered. And yet people like Vincent Van Gogh and Soren Kierkegaard are not people who have reached the Rights of the Everest. They have attained smaller mountains, whereas Lao Tzu can be said to belong to the heights of Gourishankar. It is always a numbered few who ever reach that height. Now if we hope that even a small part of the human race would some day dwell on these heights, we shall have to wait for thousands of years.

Therefore it is, that Lao Tzu's influence is so little. But time and again such people have to found. Their vibrations are never lost. They forever keep echoing. Sometimes it happens that such people are completely forgotten. Then if someone begins to talk like them, we feel he is saying something new.

Lao Tzu's disciple Chuang-Tse has said, "Every discovery is a rediscovery." There is nothing in the world that was not known before. But those who knew were on such a high plane, that their teachings could not become common and were lost. Then when another person capable of understanding comes along, we feel he is saying something new. But there is nothing in this world that has not been known thousands of times before.

It is Man's bad luck that he does not live on the mountains. He lives on the plains and therefore the wisdom of the peaks get lost and forgotten. Then after a long time someone comes along and brings them back and they appear new. These sayings of Lao Tzu are a few of the supreme statements that Man has given before. They are the statements that are on the boundary-line, the very last words that can be spoken. And Lao Tzu stands tottering at the verge of this boundary-line, beyond which is the realm of No-Word. Lao Tzu speaks from this ultimate boundary-line. So he alone can understand him, who has reached this boundary whereas those who have not do not understand him. This is no fault of Lao Tzu.

Then there are a few things which you will not understand until you have experienced them. If we tell a child things that are beyond his sphere of experience, he will hear alright but he will quickly forget it all. The matter will not register in his remembrance. Only that registers in the mind, which is within the boundary of experience and coincides with it. So our experience should also tally somewhere. Now whatsoever Lao Tzu says does not tally with our experiences at all. Therefore Lao Tzu's book remains untouched – and this is a boon!

Now here Lao Tzu says, "Those who are capable of action-less action, are the wise. Those who speak without words are the exponents of truth." He does not move and yet does everything. His lips do not open and yet the message is conveyed. Now this is nowhere within our experience. We shout ourselves hoarse and yet the message is not conveyed. Then how can we believe that anything can be conveyed without speech? When after so much talk, the message is not conveyed; the same message is repeated to the ends of our lives and still it does not go home! We make so many arrangements and yet we die the beggars we were.

Lao Tzu says, "Make no arrangement, do not manage your affairs." Just be and all arrangements will take place duly. We will say – "What madness! we refuse to be mad with you!"

Only those will be willing to follow Lao Tzu, who are well-acquainted with the madness of our so-called society. Those who are so badly filled with melancholy because of us, those who have understood well that what we call sensibility is pure ignorance and that what we call wisdom is utter foolishness, those alone will be willing to step towards Lao Tzu.

And to step along with Lao Tzu, is to step into danger for he gives no assurance of protection. The path he shows is so dangerous that you will be lost; you shall be no more.

Lao Tzu says, "This is a path of extinction, annihilation is the way." He alone will be prepared to go with him who knows for certain that by achieving he achieved nothing, now he should lose and see.

When by running nothing was attained, he will halt and see and when wisdom took him nowhere, he will become insane and see.

It is very few people who gather so much courage therefore very few can go along with him.

Enough for today. We shall continue tomorrow.

CHAPTER 8

Action free from ownership and recognition

26 June 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 2: SUTRA 4

ALL THINGS TAKE THEIR RISE BUT HE DOES NOT TURN AWAY FROM THEM; HE GIVES THEM LIFE, BUT DOES NOT TAKE POSSESSION OF THEM; HE GOES THROUGH THESE PROCESSES, BUT DOES NOT TAKE POSSESSION OF THEM; HE ACTS, BUT DOES NOT APPROPRIATE, IT IS BECAUSE HE LAYS CLAIM TO NO CREDIT THAT THE CREDIT CANNOT BE TAKEN AWAY FROM HIM.

Therefore the sage arranges his affairs in an effortless attitude and conveys his Teachings through silence.

Then in the following Sutra, Lao Tzu says, ”Everything happens by itself.”

Among the basic doctrines of Tao, there is this one which says, ”All things happen by themselves.” There is nothing that requires our presence to be necessary to happen. Everything takes place, even without us. Sleep comes, so does hunger, birth happens, so does death; all these happen by themselves.

But we presume all that happens by itself as motivated by us. According to Lao Tzu, the biggest delusion of Man is, that he claims himself the doer of all that happens. To become the doer of that which happens, is the biggest of ignorance. Also, Lao Tzu does not say, ”Do not steal, commit no fraud”. He says, ”Neither can you do anything, nor can you leave anything.” You are free to leave a thing only if you are the doer. If I have done something, I can leave it also. If I am not the doer,

there is no way to leave it. It is necessary to understand this well for all the concepts of the theory of renunciation stand against this theory of Lao Tzu.

He who renounces, believes that he can renounce. Lao Tzu says, "When you cannot do anything, there is no question of leaving it." He says, "There is no possibility of either doer-ship or renunciation in actions." The only freedom you have is, of becoming the doer. That you may not be the doer, even that freedom you have. Whatever is to happen will keep on happening.

There is a joke prevalent since the time of Lao Tzu, which makes an interesting story: A youth was sitting on the sea-shore with his beloved. It was a moonlit night and the waves were rising high in the ocean and rushing towards the shore. The youth lifted his face towards the skies and said, "Flow yet faster, O, Ocean! Let your waves rise higher!" The night was beautiful and the waves were of course rising high and rushing towards the shore! But the beloved is wonder-struck! "You have so much strength, I did not know!" She says, "I could never have dreamt that the mighty ocean obeys you! You ordered the waves to rise and they rose. You beckoned them to the shore and to here they were!" This story circulated in Lao Tzu's time. And Lao Tzu says, "Such are our affairs in life." The waves rise and fall but we stand on the shore and pass an order and believe within ourselves that it is we who have caused the waves to rise!

Lao Tzu says, "You can neither be the doer nor the renunciate." If you get acquainted with this little truth, that things happen by themselves, it is enough. They require no one's presence to happen.

It is in the nature of things to happen. And he who knows and experiences this, is a sage, according to Lao Tzu.

At the same time Lao Tzu says, "But the saint is not indifferent or opposed to the happenings; for when things happen of themselves, the saints are not opposed to them." The question of opposition or renunciation or apathy, arises only if I am the doer. Understand this: Hunger comes; the ignorant man eats more – thinking, 'I am eating'. But he too cannot just go on eating, even if he wanted.

There is an anecdote in Nasruddin's life. He was on a pilgrimage with one of his disciples. Every day he noticed that after meals, his disciple would shake himself vigorously and then begin to eat again. Months passed and this happened every day. One day he confronted him and asked "What is this? You eat then shake yourself, then eat again, then shake yourself again, then eat again?" The youth replied, "This way, I create more space within myself so that I can take in more food." Nasruddin gave him a tight slap on his face and said, "Rascal! Why did you not tell me earlier? Oh, to think of all the food I could have eaten but did not eat! I had my suspicions that I could eat much more t4an I did."

The ignorant man thinks, he is eating. There is another type of ignorant man who thinks he is fasting. Lao Tzu would call both these ignorant, for both take themselves to be the doer – the one in doing, the other in non-doing. Lao Tzu would say, "He is wise who is against neither." He does not feel he is doing the eating of the food. He keeps watching – when he feels hungry he eats; when he does not, he does not eat. When there is no hunger, he is fasting, when he feels hungry, he eats. He neither denies hunger nor does he go out of his way to gratify it. He plays no mischief with hunger. He remains a witness and watches the process of hunger.

Someone approached the fakir Takwan and asked, "What is your sadhana?" Takwan replied, "I practise no sadhana. My guru has directed me to sleep when I feel sleepy and get up when sleep is done. When I am hungry I eat, when I don't I do not eat. When I feel like talking, I talk, otherwise I remain silent." The youth said, "Is this called sadhana?"

Takwan replied, "I also do not know whether it is sadhana or not, for 'that which you can practise is ignorance' says my Guru. So I do not practise anything. I merely observe whatever is happening. But this I can vouch that ever since I have accepted sleep, hunger, etc., I am in complete bliss; no misery has ever come upon me, for I have accepted all. Now when pain or anguish come, I do not take them as so but as a happening that is taking place."

Remember, pain appears as pain only when we deny it. The sting of pain is not in the pain but in our non-acceptance of it. We feel it should not have been so but it is – that is the sting. If I were to understand that what has happened was bound to happen in just the way it happened and could not be otherwise, then there is no sting in that pain. Then, there is no pain if happiness is snatched away from you. The joy that was yours, should not have been taken away from you, you could not save it – this feeling brings the pain. If I know that pain and pleasure come and go; whatever comes, goes also and if there is no inclination within mc tc. drop the one and hold on to the other, then there is no question of pain and anguish.

Takwan says, "I do not know what sadhana is. All I know is, that from the day I have known that things happen by themselves and I play no part in it, I have known no misery."

Lao Tzu says, "They are not hostile. They know things happen by themselves." To understand this it will be useful to understand Mahavira.

A sutra of Mahavira is very close to this sutra. And it is a priceless sutra. Wherever Mahavira uses the term Dharma, he has never used it to imply religion. By Dharma, Mahavira meant – the nature of things. His sutra is which means – The nature of things, is Dharma. Fire burns, that is its dharma. Water flows towards lower level – that is its dharma. The child grows into a youth, that is his dharma. Happiness comes and goes – that is its nature. Nothing is abiding or permanent in this world – that is the nature of the world. Man is born and he dies – that is his fate, his nature.

Mahavira says, "All this is the quality, the character of things." If you can understand this well, you can become free this very moment.

We are harassed and troubled because we fight our Nature. If the body gets old, we struggle to retain youth. If the body is diseased, we fight The disease. But this is the nature of the body. Whatever happens in this world, is natural phenomena. Lao Tzu says, "All that happens, happens by itself but the wise do not oppose any happening." There is no reason for opposition. By opposing, I am only trying to prove that I can oppose.

No, Lao Tzu says, "The wise do not even desire liberation because all desires prove a bondage." They never wish that a particular thing should happen in a particular way, for he thus desires lands himself in trouble. This world does not move according to anyone's desires. It moves according to its own law. Sometimes your desires are gratified then you are deluded – just as you believed the ocean obeyed you. And when the waves do not rise, you keep on ordering them and feel miserable when they do not obey. The ocean neither flows according to your will nor stops when you order.

It is a matter of coincidence that the waves rise according to your desire sometimes and sometimes not. Sometimes you keep on winning and you feel it is you who is winning. Sometimes you lose and you feel you are losing. But the truth is just this, that the nature of things is such that at times it gives you the illusion of winning and at times of losing. Sometimes whatever dice you throw is otherwise. If your desire coincides with the nature of the thing, things turn out right for you; if it does not, things do not work out right for you.

I have heard of a man who was incurring losses in the market for a number of years. He was a multi-millionaire. His loss ran into millions of rupees. All his friends were aware of his consistent bad luck. Therefore they would do just the opposite of what he did and they always gained. This matter became so well-known that the whole market-business followed his movements.

After a number of years, things suddenly took a turn. He, as usual made the first move and as usual, all the other traders did the opposite. Everyone lost and he captured the whole market. All of them gathered round him and asked him the secret of his good-fortune. He said, ”Today when I was going through my books, I realised how consistently I have been losing over a period of so many years. So today I decided to do just the opposite of whatever decision I make. This time I decided against myself just as you all have been doing all this time.

”My decision was to buy and I sold. When you saw me selling, you began to buy. For the first time I realised that I was forever going against the nature of things and asserting my will obstinately. I did not know what was right but from the last few years’ experience one thing was certain that I was wrong. Therefore today I decided against my own decision.” When a man conforms with the nature of things, success is his; when he does not conform with the nature of things, he fails.

If you see this truth in the right perspective, you will understand Lao Tzu when he says he does not oppose. He stands firm in life and takes it as it comes. He does not run away because he knows it is not possible to run away from life. And if a situation occurs which requires him to run, he runs; he does not go against it and halt. So understand this well, otherwise there will be a mistake. If a situation arises and the happening requires him to run away, he will not stop. He will ho one with the running away. He does not do anything on his own, he moves with the happening. Take it this way – he does not swim, he floats. He does not throw his limbs about in the water, he just lets himself go with the current. Wherever the current goes, he goes. And he says unto the current, ”Wherever you take me, that is my destination”, verily whatever happens in the life of a person who has acquired this state of being,. is wonderful and unique and Lao Tzu has given us news of him.

”HE GIVES THEM LIFE BUT DOES NOT TAKE POSSESSION OF THEM.”

The sage gives life to whatever comes in contact with him but he does not become the possessor thereof. He gives all he has to give but does not assert his right over them. For Lao Tzu says, ”You assert your right and you insinuate the other into rebellion.” You make an enemy of the person you take possession of. You take away his freedom and you instigate him to be self-willed. The wise man never takes possession. Whatever he has, he gives and at the same time makes no conditions to receive. If he gives love, he does not ask for love in return. If it is returned however, he accepts it. If it is not returned, that fact also he accepts. There is no difference in his attitude in both these conditions. He asserts no right for then arises the question of return.

What is the meaning of right, of possessor-ship?

It means – I have done something and now I have a right to get something back in return; I have a right to the reaction thereof. If I do not get it, I shall be unhappy. And the fun of the whole thing is, the things we claim our right on, if they are attained, give no pleasure but if not attained, they leave us unhappy! Now for instance, if I love somebody, I would expect his co-operation in the time of my need. But when such co-operation is extended, it well never occur to me to even thank him! For when I have given love, I take his help for granted. There is no question of thanks. What was to happen, happened, so there will be no pleasure in the happening. No pleasure can be derived from that which is taken for granted.

Another example: I am walking along a road. If my handkerchief falls down and my wife picks it up for me, there is no pleasure in the act. If another woman (preferably unknown), picks it up and gives it to me, the same act gives a lot of pleasure! I will thank her also for I did not expect it of her. If my mother sits the whole night pressing my head I think nothing of it but if another woman presses it for a short while, I shall not forget her all my life perhaps! Where right is asserted, we expect things to be as they should be. If this is so, it gives no pleasure but if this is not so, it gives pain.

Now this is a most interesting thing: Possessor-ship brings nothing but pain. It never brings pleasure for it is taken for granted that it should yield pleasure. If it does not bring the pleasure it should have brought, it becomes painful. Lao Tzu says, ”THE SAGE GIVES THEM LIFE BUT DOES NOT TAKE POSSESSION OF THEM.” In fact, the sage knows the secret of happiness. His condition is exactly the opposite of ours. Since he does not assert his right, he is happy when anyone does something for him and there is no cause for pain if anyone does not. The expectation was never there that anyone should do anything for him. Remember this is exactly the opposite of our condition.

If a sage is invited to a meal, he feels very blessed and grateful for he had never thought anyone would be so kind and thoughtful as to feed him. It had never occurred to him that it was his right to be invited to a meal, that his followers are duty-bound to invite him. He is grateful, he thinks his host to be very kind to feed him – because he never expects! There is pain behind expectation, pain behind assertion of right.

There is nothing but hell in possessor-ship. Therefore wherever there is possessor-ship there is hell. Let this owner-ship be of any kind: husband over wife, or wife over husband; friend over a friend, father over a son or even a guru over the disciples. Where possessor-ship exists in any garb, in any form and anywhere, hell flourishes behind them. Where possessor-ship is not, in those open skies, heaven is born.

Wherever you find hell, be sure there is ownership in the relationships of those concerned. Hell cannot be otherwise. Wherever there is pain, agony, know that ownership is there and it is giving trouble. But we are strange people! We never realise that it is the ownership that is the root cause of trouble; rather, we feel it is the other who is the cause. Therefore also, we fail to understand that non-ownership brings happiness. We just cannot understand this.

The fact remains however, that wherever there is happiness there is no attitude of ownership and where there is pain, there is the ownership attitude behind it. If the sage does not have the wisdom to realise this and lift himself out of hell, his wisdom has no value.

The sage passes through every process of life.

In childhood he is a child, in youth he is a young man and in old age he becomes an old man. But when passing through youth he does not try to possess youth for he who does so. will weep when old age comes. He passes through youth without possessing it and when old age comes, he welcomes it also. He passes through life without claiming to own life. And this is why, when death comes, it finds him waiting with open arms. He claims no ownership of life, therefore death cannot snatch anything from him.

Remember, only that can be snatched from you over which you have developed the attitude of ownership. Your theft can be discovered, you can be looted, you can be deceived, when the feeling of ownership arises in you.

A wise man can never be fooled, nothing can be taken away from him, nothing can be stolen from him, nothing of his can be destroyed for the basic sutra of all these do not allow the sutra of ownership to take root within him. He refuses to be the owner.

Try to understand this further: ownership is the root cause of all our troubles. This attitude of ownership comes so stealthily that we cannot tell. Not only do we become masters of those things on which we can easily assert our influence but even where we cannot, we develop attitudes of. ownership. If we get so much as a seating place anywhere, we begin to assert our right. The slightest opportunity and we try to become owners – sometimes in such places, we can never imagine. Our whole lives pass in such attitudes of ownership. If you come to me and I make you sit lovingly beside me, you will begin to assert ownership on me also!

People write to me. As a rule, I reply the first letter, and at once I receive a second letter, then a third, a fourth! When I am able, I reply them but soon I discover they have nothing to write! It is only to get a letter from me that they write – just anything. Then I do not reply a few of their letters; and right enough I receive a derogatory letter filled with abuses! Then I wonder – what has happened? I did not reply one or two letters but they had established their ownership as soon as they received my first reply!

If I do not reply or if I have delayed by eight days or so, their letters come where anger is clearly visible – ”why have you not replied yet?” They are definitely pained and hence the anger. You have the right to write a letter but how does my answer become a definite mud? That I should write to you, is my right but that does not mean that an answer is absolutely incumbent. If I am free to write you are free not to reply. But the mind makes such subtle arrangements of ownership and then it becomes very sad and unhappy.

Lao Tzu says, ”They pass through all processes.” What we know as life is a long span of processes. Every moment a process is on, either of love or hate, of wealth or friendship, one or the other is always in process. Sleep comes, breath comes and goes, we eat, we come, we go. But in all this net-work of processes, the sage does not become the owner. Therefore they never fall. No one can remove or drop him from his mastery of himself.

Lao Tzu says, ”HE ACTS BUT DOES NOT APPROPRIATE!” They do what they deem proper but take no credit. They never say: ”Say that I have done this, accept the fact.”

Nasruddin is bathing in a river. The river is deep. He had no idea how deep it was, He went further in and was about to drown. A man saved him. Then wherever this man met him, whether in the

mosque or the market-place, he never failed to remind him: ”Remember, it was I who saved you?” Nasruddin was fed up. The man never missed a single opportunity. Wherever he met him, he would say, ”Remember Nasruddin, how T saved you from drowning?”

One day Nasruddin caught him by the hand and said, ”Come with me, quick!” He took him to the river and leaving him on the shore, he went and stood exactly at the spot where he had saved him. Then he said to him, ”Brother, I am standing exactly where you saved me. Is it not? Now please go away and leave me. Do not save me, it has turned out very expensive. Leave me to my fate I shall die if I have to, I shall live if fate decrees but you please go!”

Whatever little we do, we proclaim with the beat of drum; and this very act shows this was a transaction and not an action on our part. We experienced no joy out of it, rather there also, we bargained, there also we calculated.

In this sutra Lao Tzu says, ”They perform the act but take no credit.” When the task is done, they leave silently. When the performance is over, They leave without a sound. They do not wait, even so much as you can thank them. It always happens that whatever the sage does, he does so quietly that you are not even aware of it. More often than not, someone else takes the credit for it. The saint retires to a corner while another steps in to take the acclaim. The sage is in the fore-front during the action and steps away back when the credit is given – why?

The sage believes that the act itself is so much bliss! the task in itself is a perfect joy. Only he tries to take credit who gets no joy in performing the task.

A mother brings up her son. If she experiences joy in bringing him up, she will never go about saying it was she who brought him up. If she ever mentions that she has brought him up, kept him in her womb for nine months, taken so much trouble over him, then know that she has denied herself the joy of motherhood. She was merely a nurse; she could not be a mother. To be a mother is so blissful that if she had really been the mother, she had nothing to ask of the son. The bliss derived from motherhood is so much greater than the duty of motherhood!

More often than not, the sage will thank you for affording him an opportunity to experience bliss. He however, expects no thanks from you.

IT IS BECAUSE HE LAYS CLAIM TO NO CREDIT THAT THE CREDIT CANNOT BE TAKEN AWAY FROM HIM.

In the final utterance Lao Tzu says that since they claim no credit they cannot be deprived of the credit. Only he can be refuted, who asserts credit. Claims can be disclaimed but how can he be rebutted, who lays no claims? Lao Tzu says therefore, that he who lays no claim to credit cannot be deprived of it.

Those who demand credit, only they can be refuted and the thing is, that they are already deprived of the credit for they attain nothing from the act.

The desire for acclamation is a proof that the task in itself afforded no pleasure and so pleasure is sought in acclamation. Actually, the desire for praise arises when the action is not performed for the

performance of an action is so total in itself, that the question of acclamation does not arise. But he who does not perform the action in its entirety, feels repentance and remorse within and to kill the worm of repentance, he proclaims credit.

The mother who has not been able to do anything for her son, will always recount things she did for him. And the mother who has done a lot for her son, will always recount what all she could not do for him and this will always irk her. Such a mother, is a mother in the true sense of the word, whereas the former is not really the mother. All claims in life are born out of remorse.

Psychologists of today affirm the truth of this fact, specially Adler. He is one of the three most acclaimed psychologists in the world. He accepts this statement of Lao Tzu very profoundly.

Adler says, "He who makes a claim, does so because within himself he feels he is not worthy of it." It is an inferior man who is always ambitious; and always the fearful makes a show of fearlessness; and he who is weak within makes a show of strength; and the ignorant is always busy loading himself with knowledge.

Adler says, "A man always claims to be the opposite of what he is." What is within is always painful, so he tries to wipe out his inside with the opposite acclamations. This is true to a great extent. Those who suffer from inferiority complex always try to prove to the world that they are something; and till they succeed, they cannot get out of the knot of inferiority. The day the world acclaims them that they are something, it becomes easier for them also to believe the fallacy.

But the feeling of nothingness remains within. It cannot be wiped out that easily. Only a self-deception can be maintained.

Try to understand this statement of Lao Tzu, that the sage makes no claim to credit, in this context. The real claimers make no claim. Their claim is so righteous, so authentic that it requires no saying. Their claim is so sound that even God cannot deny it. Therefore there is no necessity of acclaim.

Jesus was crucified. His disciples thought he could never be crucified. A miracle was bound to take place. Jesus cannot be hung on the cross. On the contrary, they thought his enemies had provided a golden opportunity for him to prove that he was the son of God!

On the other hand, even the enemy challenged him that the cross will decide whether he really was the son of God. If God does not protect his own son, whom else will He protect? And if a son of God can be put to death by ordinary men and God cannot do a thing about it, then this claim is false.

The enemies of Jesus were as eagerly waiting to see what happens on the cross as his followers. If he were really the son of God, they will not be able to crucify him. His followers also eagerly awaited the moment. They looked forward for the miracle to happen.

But Jesus died quietly on the cross, like an ordinary man. When nails were being driven in his hands, his followers followed each movement expectantly – now the miracle will happen – now! The enemies also waited – perhaps this man is the son of God? But both were disappointed: the enemies as well as the followers, Jesus died as any ordinary man. This was a great blow.

There was no need for the enemy to be dejected. They on the contrary said, "We told you so, this man was a fraud! He was nothing more than the son of an ordinary carpenter. He was no son of God – and so he died and the fact is proved!" But the followers were terribly hurt. That was natural. Their expectations were great, they were disillusioned.

For 2,000 years, the lovers of Christ have pondered upon this. Jesus should have proved that he was the son of God. If however, they could understand Lao Tzu, they will be able to understand Jesus.

Jesus is so much the son of God, the claim is so very authentic that there is no need to prove it. Had Jesus performed a miracle, he would have fallen in my esteem, for it would have shown that he was very eager to prove his bona fide. His silent acceptance of death, his indifference, shows that he was no ordinary man. An ordinary man struggles. No, Jesus did not do anything, leave aside struggling. The cross was heavy and the men carrying it were old, they could hardly carry it. Jesus said, "Put the cross on my shoulder, I am as yet young." So he carried his own cross up to the hill. Then without a word, he climbed the cross and died silently.

The claim was so profound, the presence of God so near him that proving it was of no consequence. Had Jesus tried to prove himself, he would have only proved that he was not the son of God. In fact, the one whose right it is to acclaim, is never the acclaimer. Christianity has not understood this fact even up to now, for Christianity knows not of Lao Tzu and without knowing Lao Tzu, you cannot understand Jesus. The Jew religion has no sutras whereby it can understand Jesus and there has never been a personality like Jesus, ever in their history. To the Jew, Jesus was a foreign element.

The truth is, Jesus received his message of truth from India, Egypt and China. He received his training in these countries. The quintessence of the very life of the East. was in the possession of Jesus. Therefore those who know. consider it a miracle that Jesus performed no miracle! Small people make great efforts to bring about something unusual. Jesus did nothing. The matter was so straight and clear – where was the question of acclaiming? And before whom had he to prove himself? When the claim was clear before God Himself, there was no need to prove before man! Only he tries to prove himself before men, who cannot prove himself before God.

Because they claim no credit, they cannot be denied credit. Therefore I say, that since Jesus did not claim credit, the credit cannot be taken away from him. He proved himself the son of God by the miracle of no-miracle. A Man's mind is always ready to perform something. And where there was such tension! – Jesus hanging on the cross, millions of people waiting and watching, all eager to witness a miracle, friends and followers! All were disappointed.

Jesus died silently. It was the same man who touched a corpse and it came to life. He is the same person whose touch brought back the sick to health. He is the same who sat under a dry tree and it spring to life bearing new leaves! And he is the ONE, who ordered the waves by a mere lifting of hand, to be silent and the Ocean obeyed!

Even when dying, he made no claims. The enemies too were shocked! This man did know something after all. He may not be the son of God but he certainly had some knowledge and power for they had seen the sick being cured by the mere touch of his hand; they had seen corpses coming back to life at his command. The enemies also expected a miracle – something – perhaps

the breaking of the cross or they being unable to hammer nails into him or no blood coming out of Jesus – something! And these were ordinary matters that a common-place yogi could also perform. An ordinary yogi with some knowledge of pranayam, can check the flow of his blood-stream and prevent the blood from flowing. People were filled with expectation but nothing happened.

This man must have been unique! His thus dying without a sound, is a miracle in itself. If you understand Lao Tzu. you will understand Jesus.

There are many sayings of Jesus that cannot be understood without understanding Lao Tzu. Jesus says, "Blessed are those who have nothing for they shall own the Kingdom of heaven." This is difficult to understand unless we understand Lao Tzu. Jesus says, "Blessed are the humble, for they shall have the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the ones who are poor in the Spirit for all the treasures of the Lord are theirs." The source of these statements is no other than Lao Tzu. They have no place in the Jew scriptures.

The Jewish tradition says, "If a man takes away your one eye, you take away both of his." If a man blinds another in one eye, the community punished him by blinding him in both. Now here is born a boy who says, "If someone snatches your coat, give him your shirt also." – Perhaps out of embarrassment he could not take it away from you! – "And if someone tells you to carry his load for two miles, you carry it for three."

This viewpoint is completely Lao-Tsein: "Take no credit and credit can never be taken away from you." Ask for acclaim and a thousand will gather round you to snatch it, for Lao Tzu says the opposite occurs at once. Desire praise and you get blame, Desire respect and contempt is certain. You aim at a throne and you will roll in the dust. Lao Tzu says, "Sit in a place from where there is no lower to go. Then no one can drop you, and it is then that you are on the throne."

According to Lao Tzu, a throne is that which cannot be moved. And who sits on the throne? You sit at a place below which there is no other. Then no one can displace you. Then you are on the throne for there is no question of displacing you.

Lao Tzu never claimed knowledge. If someone went up to him and said, "I have heard that you are a wise man". Lao Tzu would reply, "You have definitely heard wrong. Believe me. Others do not know about me as I do. I am utterly ignorant." Those who could not understand him went away thinking it was an unnecessary waste of time. Those who knew, caught hold of his feet and begged to remain with him. They knew it was always the ignorant who claimed to have knowledge. The wise always disclaimed knowledge. They always said they did not know, and that the seeker had been misguided by someone and he should go elsewhere.

There is a sect of St. Francis – and St. Francis was one of the very humble saints of Christianity. So there are Franciscan fakirs. The humility of St. Francis was unique. His humility knew no bounds but it was very difficult for his followers and disciples to be that humble. There was once a mass meeting of all Christian sects. One of the Franciscan fakirs said in his speech, "It is true that we are not as rich in tradition as the Catholics; we are also not as intelligent and wise as the Trappists and we are not as adept in prayers as the Quakers but in humility we are at the top!" This was bound to create confusion. A follower of St. Francis claiming the top position in humility! He says there is no one to beat them in humility?

The very meaning of humility is not to be above anyone. Not only does it mean not being above anyone but humility expresses the feeling of being behind everyone! Jesus has said, "Blessed are those who are always last, for in my kingdom of heaven, they shall be first."

All this is a Row of the Lao-Tsein current. Claim no credit but ignorance will make claims – even as far as the Franciscan fakir claimed! He could have easily said, "We claim no credit," but no, he said, "In humility we are at the top." In the subtle complexities of the mind, this is a very big play that the mind can even say, that it makes no claims; but then the claim is already made! Since the wise say they are ignorant therefore the mind can also claim to be ignorant. But this does not mean anything. Then we just turn round and say the same things and the mind keeps turning round and round.

The idea behind Lao Tzu's view-point is, to break and destroy the intricate wheel of life. What is this intricate wheel of life? It is this, that we invariably miss whatever we set out to do. It is just like a person who tries hard to sleep and misses sleep altogether. Sleep never comes by effort. When there is no effort, sleep comes.

Lao Tzu says, "Claim credit and you deprive yourself of it. Lay no claim and the credit is already yours." If you try to be the master you will fall into slavery; or else, who is snatching your ownership from you? Ask and you shall fall into trouble for nothing is ever obtained by begging. Ask for nothing and you already have everything. Those sutras that appear contrary, are not contrary. It is we who are topsy turvy.

Therefore they appear topsy turvy to us. Whatever we see appears, reversed. Lao Tzu will appear inverse to us – as a man standing on his head. The logical sutra would be – if you want credit, work for it; if you want fame, happiness, work to attain them. It is as simple as that. But here is a man who talks in inverse language. He says, "If you seek happiness, make no effort to attain it." Then how will happiness be achieved? Here, inspite of our efforts, happiness is not attained and he says do not even desire to be happy! Then we shall never attain it.

Watch – where all the mind's logic makes us wander! The mind says, "If with so much effort we cannot attain then without any effort how is it possible?" But Lao Tzu says, "You are deprived of it because you desire it." Try once not to desire and see. You have desired enough. You have desired for hundreds of lives and found that you attained nothing. Yet we keep on and on for the mind says, 'You have not desired enough, you have not striven enough.' And the mind is never tired of goading you thus. And its logic seems very sound. If you have not reached the peak of the mountain, you will have to strive yet more. But Lao Tzu says, "It is your desire that is the obstruction. Stop desiring." What is the meaning of this? What makes Lao Tzu say so?

Lao Tzu says this because, whatever is worth attaining in life has already been given to us. But we are so preoccupied and harassed by our desires that we fail to see this. Many a time we fail to see the thing Lying nearest to us, especially if we are restless and in a hurry. Sometimes you try frantically to remember someone's name. You say it is on the tip of your tongue and yet you cannot remember – you are in such a hurry! You meet a person and he says, "Do you remember me?" Now you start frantically trying to remember. The harder you try the more restless you become and the more you cannot recall. Then this man goes away and you relax. You begin to read the news paper or perhaps take your cup of tea and then suddenly the person's name occurs to you! When you were trying hard to remember, the name was lost; when you gave up all efforts, it came back to you.

The experience of the discoverers of the biggest scientific discoveries have been that they were unable to discover what they were out to discover as long as they searched consciously. Even the scientists who have received the Nobel Prize say, "Whatever we have known has never been known through our effort." In a moment of complete inaction, when there was no striving within, something rose from within and the answer came. Madame Curie was tired working all day on the mathematics of her problem. She had not found the answer. Then she slept and in sleep, the answer came. She got up quickly and wrote it down. In the morning she checked and found the answer correct! The answer came without any working, without any method. Then it took days to work out the method. Wherefrom did the answer come?

Those who know the innermost resources of the human being say, that whatever is to be known, is already known to man. Whatever is to be known ever on this earth, that you know already this very minute. Only, you do not know this fact. It lies embedded in man's unconsciousness waiting to manifest someday. The leaves that will appear a hundred years after on the tree, are already present in the seed; or else they could not appear on the tree. Man knows even today, what he will come to know a thousand years hence. The only thing is, he does not know he knows. He is busy seeking outside.

All moments of discovery are moments of relaxation. Newton sits under a tree and an apple falls. It was a moment of relaxation. There was no research-centre there!

There is a joke I've heard in connection with this. A scientist was exhorting his students to work hard, use their intellect. "Don't you know?" He said, "Newton was sitting under a tree. An apple fell and he made such a big discovery! And here you are slogging away, achieving nothing." One of the students stood up and said, "If we are allowed to sit under a tree, we too, may discover something!"

Under the stress and strain of a research institute even Newton would not have discovered anything. When, the happening took place, Newton was not thinking. He was thoughtless.

The greatest discoveries of the world took place only in the moments of relaxation and No-thought.

Lao Tzu's fundamental philosophy is, that if man does not desire, does not strive, does not become the doer, does not acclaim, he is bound to attain the treasures he is seeking. By seeking nothing is found. You too, will realise this some day in a moment of relaxation. And it is not necessary that you should realise this as I am saying. Perhaps some day, you languish under a tree, a fruit falls and you will suddenly understand Lao Tzu. When I am explaining, your mind is tensed up to understand. This effort to follow what I say, becomes a barrier. When you are absolutely desireless you, can understand.

In Scandinavia, Sweden and Switzerland, a new method of education is being evolved. This method I shall call Lao-Tsein. According to this method the children are not coerced into studying. In our schools the children sit all tensed up. If a child were to throw his head back and put his feet on the table, the teacher would reproach him for his bad manners?

The psychologists say that because of our old methods, we have not been able to teach much. So now this new method is evolved in which the children are absolutely relaxed. There are no hard and fast rules. The child is let free to do what he likes. He can sit or stand or spread himself out or even

lie down if he so wishes. He may even close his eyes when the teacher talks! This is absolutely the reverse of what we know! When the teacher talks they have only to listen and not strive to understand. Not only are they to hear the teacher alone but also the chirping of the cricket in the grass outside the window and the croaking of the frogs! They can hear the wind outside or even the beating of their own heart. They have merely to listen – completely relaxed!

The result of this experiment was fantastic. In three months the children completed a course that previously took two years. It was found that the tension created by the old method destroyed many cerebral tissues of the children in the course of two years.

The fact is, there is hardly a person who continues to read and write after he leaves the University. He is so tired, and bored that he does not touch books for the rest of his life. The fact however is, the Universities only give the ability to read, to understand and it is now that a person should begin. But we take University education to be the end. This is but natural for the student gets so tired, so tense that he hardly learns anything. By this new method, the subliminal consciousness is directly trained. The conscious mind is not brought in at all and hence no tension is created. The student can relax completely.

In Russia many new experiments are being carried out on Hypnopedia – night education. The student sleeps and a small mechanism is placed next to his ear. This gadget will begin to function one hour after he has fallen in deep sleep. For two hours this teaching session goes on – say between 1 and 2 A.M. at 2 a bell in the mechanism rings. The student gets up and notes all that he has learnt. He goes to sleep again. Then in the morning from 4 to 6 there will be a repetition.

The result of this method was astounding. What could not be taught over months, is easily conveyed in seven days of hypnopedic treatment. The reason is, in that state the mind is at rest, there is no tension and the child is just floating in sleep. Then whatever is conveyed, goes straight to the heart and he never forgets. The intellect is not brought into play at all.

All these are Lao-Tsein methods. If we understand this well, then you will know what I meant when I told you that Lao Tzu is invading the world from all sides. Many people do not know that these are Lao Tzu-oriented methods. Lao Tzu used to say. what will you learn by learning? Do not learn. The attempt to learn is wrong. You just pass through it. Whatever is worthy of imbibing, you will learn. You pass through, silently and in a receptive attitude. Do not endeavour for that decreases the receptivity and you become closed to influence.

Whatever Lao Tzu has said, in whichever direction he has tried to explain, is this only – that the feeling of do-ership is an illusion. Things happen. If man gives up his doer-ship, he will come to know a great deal, for the tension of 'doing' reduces the power of knowing. Whatever man desires, he never gets, Beggars never achieve anything. Emperors get everything. He who does not ask, all the world is his.

The sage does not impose his ownership, his right. He does whatever happens in life that is worth doing. But he takes no credit – and all credit is his!

Question 1

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE PLACE FOR METHOD IN LAO TZU'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE? HOW CAN A MAN REACH HIS GOAL WHOSE AIM IS NOT DOING BUT JUST FLOATING? AND IS EFFORT NOT NECESSARY TO REACH THE GOAL? LAO TZU'S METHOD OF NO-DOING, TO BE INACTIVE, ALSO ESTABLISHES A GOAL. AND CAN WE CALL IT WISDOM TO LET OURSELVES LOOSE ON UNKNOWN AND UNFELT WAYS? IS THIS THE CHARACTERISTIC OF A WISE MAN OR AN UNWISE MAN?

Bhagwan Sri: Lao Tzu does not believe in method for he says, "Whatever is attained by method will not be natural." Try to understand this a little: That which is attained by practice, cannot be natural and that which is inculcated, is no more than a habit. The nature of a thing is that which is already has without practice. What is, is the character of a thing. That which has to be created, is not natural. One man can develop the habit of smoking, another can develop the habit of praying. Both are habits and all habits overspread the character just as leaves spread over water. The character, the quality of the person, is suppressed.

Lao Tzu says nothing is to be practised. What you already have, what you have already attained, that which is you, that alone has to be known. Therefore develop no new habits. Lao Tzu is neither in favour of Yoga nor Sadhana or anything. Lao Tzu says, "Without imposing habits on yourself, know that which you were before birth and which you will be after death. Seek Him who is even now present deep within you. Also, whatever method you practise, will bear effect only on the circumference. Nothing can be attempted on the centre. Whatever paint and varnish you apply, will be only the surface, the body. At the most, the effect will be on the mind. But character, nature, is beyond body and mind. There is no necessity for you to do anything to know your nature.

But remember – not to do anything, is a very big doing. Not to do anything is not a small thing. When we hear this we say, "But we are doing nothing!" This is absolutely alright and Lao Tzu also says, "As we are – doing nothing."

But Lao Tzu is not talking about you. You are doing a lot of things. If you are not attaining God you are attaining the world. Your practice continues! If you are not out to seek God, you are out to loss him and you are straining every nerve towards that end. So do not think you are doing nothing and this is exactly what Lao Tzu says. Your not doing anything is no 'No-Doing'. Rather, it is doing a great deal in the direction of the mundane world and nothing in the direction of God. Lao Tzu is against you, as you are.

Lao Tzu says only one in a million from worldly men set out to attain God-realisation, but here again he applies methods as is his habit. To attain God, he uses the same method that he used to achieve wealth. First he earned riches, now he is out to earn God. In the same way he toils and strains his body. Lao Tzu says, "You of course are wrong but even this man is wrong." If that which is to be attained is somewhere in the future. then effort is necessary. But it is already attained. It has only to he discovered, uncovered. And all methods will only cover it more and hide it.

Now you may ask, "Then what do the various orders of Sadhana do? Are they wrong?"

According to Lao Tzu, they are absolutely wrong, for Lao Tzu says "Do nothing. Let go! And you will know." According to you the methods are correct because you understand the language of 'doing' only. You do not understand the meaning of the language of 'No-doing'. One in a million understands

what Lao Tzu is trying to convey – No-doing. He who grasp the meaning of No-Doing, is liberated that very moment. There is no need for him to wait for another moment. But the rest of the people do not understand. Then what is to be done about them?

Then is it, that Lao Tzu should keep on saying and the rest of the people keep on doing what they like? No, Then those who understand only the language of action, must be made to do something; and they have to be so involved in the doing that they fall tired and leave what they are doing. Remember the happening will not take place first. When the sadhaka is completely tired, completely spent and has reached the peak of tension, when he can do no more, then the tension breaks.

There are two rules of tension. (1) You understand it thoroughly and leave it this moment. Now for instance, I have clenched my fist. Now one way is, that you can tell me it is unnatural to clench the fist and I shall get tired unnecessarily for I shall have to exert myself to clench the fist. Then I may ask you, "What shall I do? How shall I unclench my fist?" And you will reply, "No method is needed to open the palm. You have to do something to clench the fist but if you have understood, you will realise you have to do nothing to unclench it. The fist will open on its own. Your question was irrelevant. There was no need even to ask."

You say you have understood whereas the fact is, you have not understood. If you have understood, the fist should open. That would be the only proof that you have grasped the meaning. If we do not indulge in clenching the fist, it is already open!

You have never had to do anything for keeping the hands open. Have you ever thought of that? Therefore there is no exertion, no load, no trouble on an open palm, for you have to do nothing. Liberation is man's very nature. The mundane world (Samsara) is unnatural to man. Samsara is like the closed fist and liberation is like an open palm.

Lao Tzu, here would ask "You ask about opening the palm"? If you had asked about clenching the fist that could be understood. For opening you have to do nothing – just open it!

We find this very difficult – how can we open? The truth is, we do not want to open. We feel there is a Kohinoor tucked away within our hands. Now if Lao Tzu says, "Open!" Then the Kohinoor will drop! And we do not want even Lao Tzu to know about it. So we ask him, "How shall we go about it? What shall we do? Show us a way!" These are mere postponements to cling on to the Kohinoor. Your condition is, "I must first learn to open the fist properly."

Now Lao Tzu does not know what we are hiding. So he urges us, "Friends, open your fists, you have to do nothing!" He is not aware that something will have to be done for man is under an illusion of grasping something within his hand. We are not unnecessarily filled with tension! We are afraid that once the tension is lost, we will lose the diamond.

Wherever there are pockets of tension, . we are holding on to something. Let go of all ownership! And it is nothing but a whole big play of ownership. Supposing the son leaves the house or the wife leaves you? All ownership will be lost. We say, we have understood thoroughly but what is the method, the way to get rid of our tensions? These methods we ask only to postpone the day. "We shall try your methods, then we shall see," you say. "Right now it does not open. When it opens, we shall see." Now Lao Tzu cannot for the life of him understand what you are talking about. What have

you to do, to open the fist? Just nothing! You have to do nothing for that which is natural to you, which is your very nature. All you have to do is – open!

Now there is another interesting way: If you cannot open the fist straight, there is another way. This is the second way. There are only two ways: One - from doing reach the No-doing state or two - jump or go step by step.

If you are not prepared to open your fist, other means have to be found. Then you are told to clench your fist hard – as hard as you possible can, with all your might. When you reach the climax, when you can clench no further, you will find that the fist is opening on its own and the Kohinoor is falling! But alas, it is too late! You can no longer clench your fist for you have used up all your strength. There is no energy left to save the diamond!

So the methods say, ”Clench the fist!” And this is said knowing for your stupidity is very apparent – You cannot open the fist! It will only open when you can clench no more!

Understand this well. Then you will be incapable of clenching the fist. You will suddenly realise that all your efforts to do so will go in vain for you have no energy left. Now you cannot clench; it opens! So methods are to be evolved to make you clench your fist harder and yer harder! All methods are meant to take you to – the peak of tension, to the climax, after which dispersal starts. Suddenly you discover that the fist has opened and the diamond has fallen! It was never there. We never gathered courage to open the fist and see for fear that it might fall or the neighbour might know about it! Then you feel all the effort of holding on to it, was in vain. So the method says, ”Clench your fist!”

The methodless way of Lao Tzu says, ”You will not attain till vou open. Open when you will, now or later.” Lao Tzu says, ”Open now!” He knows there is no Kohinoor but we do not and hence all the trouble. Other methods also have the same goal in view but they work according to your understanding. Lao Tzu’s method is according to his understanding. Therefore he is bound to go over your head.

The second way says, ”If you cannot open the palm, clench it and it will open.” Then it shows methods of clenching harder and harder. They say, ”Swim yet further, yet further!” But where does the ocean end? Then how long will you swim?”

Lao Tzu says, ”Do not stress uselessly for the Ocean is shoreless. Do not strive, just float.” Lao Tzu says, ”There is no destination. The Ocean is the destination.” You have to dip into it, be one with it. If you swim, you will be fighting it. Then how will you be one with it? You will always be apart from it.

The swimmer is never one with the ocean. To swim means to fight. We shall not allow the Ocean to drown us, to destroy us; we shall protect ourselves. We shall fight the waves. And the shores and reach the destination. This is our dimension – where we want to reach, which is our goal. The other dimension is of one who floats and that is what Lao Tzu says, ”There is no destination save the ocean; there are no shores except the mid-ocean, there is nowhere to reach except where you are!” So let go! Do not swim. Flow away; to flow with the current is the destination. You will attain this very moment if you let go! Then you will be one with the ocean. The enmity with the ocean will fall and there will be an intimate friendship.

But we say, how can one leave that way? There is bound to be the shore and if we let ourselves at the mercy of the ocean, who knows whether we shall reach at all! So we will swim. Then these various methods say, ”Then swim, swim as hard as you can!” Then a moment will come when the hands and feet will become life-less, your very breath, your very lungs will give way. And the shores are nowhere in sight. Wherever you see, there is water, water everywhere. Swim where you may, there is only the ocean. The shore seems to be at a distance. When you reach near, you find it was nothing but waves. Lives upon lives we keep swimming and all we find is the ocean – nothing else. Then at last when we are tired, we give up.

And in this giving up, the happening takes place, that Lao Tzu spoke of, many births before. The day this happens, you will feel sorry you did not listen to Lao Tzu earlier. It was not possible for you, as you are, to believe Lao Tzu however. You are clever people and it is the characteristic of clever people that until they try out all their cunning, they will not believe. When his cunning and cleverness run out and he is completely spent, then alone does a person heed. In any case, the happening takes place as soon as you let go as Lao Tzu says. Will you tire yourself out and reach there or will you use your understanding?

That which can happen now this very moment by understanding takes a number of births by the tiring-out process. There is a time gap, no other difference.

Enough for today.

CHAPTER 9

The poison of ambition and the order of life

19 July 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 3 : SUTRA 1

ACTION WITHOUT DEEDS

NOT TO RULE AND EMPLOY MEN OF SUPERIOR ABILITY, IS THE WAY TO KEEP THE PEOPLE FROM RIVALRY AMONG THEMSELVES; NOT TO PRIZE ARTICLES WHICH ARE DIFFICULT TO PROCURE IS THE WAY TO KEEP THEM FROM BECOMING THIEVES; NOT TO SHOW THEM WHAT IS LIKELY TO EXCITE THEIR DESIRES IS THE WAY TO KEEP THEIR MINDS FROM DISORDER.

What is the worry of man? What is his trouble? What is his distress?

If there is one man who is worried or a few men, one could understand that they may be at fault. But the opposite is the case. Once in a while we come across a calm and composed person or a person really filled with well-being. The rest of us are restless, unhealthy and suffering. Illness seems to be the order of the day and well-being and good health seem to be exceptions. Ignorance seems to be the soul of life and knowledge, an accidental happening – a coincidence. It seems that to be a human being is to be ill, worried, distressed.

We never know how sometimes, someone becomes carefree, relaxed! Either it is a mistake of Nature or a boon from the Gods! The rule seems to be: As we are, we are diseased, ailing harassed.

This sutra of Lao Tzu is unique. He says the cause of restlessness in so many people, is the make-up of the human mind, the fundaments of his culture, the mode of thinking of his civilisation, the very structure of his society. Each man is so placed that he is bound to be ill.

The latest research in the West shows that each man is born a genius but we have created such a state of affairs around us that the genius is maimed and almost destroyed.

Swami Ram writes in his memoirs that while in Japan, he saw pine trees the size of just one span. He was surprised! The trees were not saplings. They were 100-150 years old but their growth was stunted. When he inquired of the gardener, he was shown the bottom of the pots. They were broken and the roots were regularly cut by the gardener. The roots could not grow, so the trees also could not shoot up. It is very necessary for roots to go deep down into the earth, if the tree has to grow taller. Now it the gardener does not want the tree to grow taller. He will keep on clipping the roots with the result that the tree will grow old but remain small.

Our method for human beings is also somewhat similar. Therefore all the people we see, have grown only a span in height whereas they could have touched the skies.

We have been feeding poison to the roots of mankind.

This poisoning has gone on for ages with the result we have forgotten it is poison. Then each generation puts in its own share of poison. Your elders pour poison into your roots and you pour poison into your children's roots. Naturally every father does to his son what his father did to him and so the vicious circle goes on.

Lao Tzu has said a few things in connection with this poison.

To understand this we have first and foremost to understand that what has been fed to the human mind in largest quantity, is the poison of ambition. The whole structure of our society is based on ambition. We make it a point to make the littlest child ambitious. He is goaded on and on to stand first in whatever he does – whether at school or at play, while learning behaviour or wearing clothes; whatever he does, or whatever we make him do, we see that he is well caught in the spirit of competition.

Ambition means: We make his ego stand in competition with the ego of others. We tell him that others should not overtake him. His legging behind will leave no place for his ego. So wherever he is, he should always try to be at the top. This being the first, is our poison. Whether in clothes or in business or in education or whether in worship and prayer or in renunciation or in penance we are taught constantly to remember that 'I am being judged vis-a-vis others'. I have forever to see where I stand with regard to others. What is my place in the line? Am I lagging behind? If so, I shall be pained.

And if there is a long line behind me, I shall be delighted. Those who are happy are only so when they know they are giving pain to others behind them. Or else there is no delight.

But the world is so big, that no one person can be absolutely in the fore-front; and life so complicated that there does not arise the question of being in the forefront. This complexity of life is multi-faceted. If a man succeeds in amassing a lot of wealth, he finds someone else has beaten him in health then be he a beggar begging on the streets. whose clothes are in tatters. One person may be rich in health but he finds himself most lacking in looks. If a man is a successful businessman, he finds many others who are intellectually much above him. And more often than not a very intellectual

person finds it hard to obtain two square meals a day, while others with much lesser intelligence build palaces for themselves.

Life is many-faced – multi-dimensional. Then if in every direction a man tries to be at the top, he is bound to go mad. It is a miracle if he does not! The whole structure is insane. Therefore, wherever we stand there is pain and anguish for we find some standing before us and some behind!

To be ambitious is never to think in terms of 'who I am' but to think in terms of myself as related to others. Never to see myself straight in the face but always in comparison with others. Never to see whether, where I stand gives pleasure or not but to see that others do not gain more happiness than me. Also not to worry if I am in pain, if others are undergoing greater pain. Then I can be content.

It is said that once, there were floods in a village. An old farmer was looking sad and worried for all his fields and cattle were carried away by the flood waters. His young neighbour asked him "Grandpa, you look very worried? Have you lost all your goats in the floods?" "Have you lost yours too?" The old man asked, "Yes" replied the young man, "And did all your cattle die too?" He asked again "Yes," said the young man. "And are all your fields washed away?" "Yes," said the young man again. "In that case," says the old man, "I have no reason to be so worried." The question was not whether he had lost all but whether others lost equally or more!

Whether in joy or in sorrow, we have always to be aware where we are in the line. Our thinking is arranged in lines. We never think of ourselves as free individuals, we always see and worry about our place in the line – where we stand in the queue. And this is a circular queue. We overtake one, then another, then another, always hoping to be first but we find always that there are always some in front of us!

The queue is round. There is no straight line. And usually the one who runs a great deal suddenly discovers that he lags far behind others! He finds that those he left way back, stand in front of him! Therefore invariably, those who reach the peak of success, fall into calamity. They are always frustrated and what is this frustration? They find that inspite of all their toil and labour they have not reached the peak and those they left far behind, suddenly appear right in front of them!

Understand Lao Tzu's sutra in this context.

Lao Tzu says that if there are no quality-grades of talent and aptitude, there would be no struggle and no envy or rivalry. "Why should we make talent a grade to judge people?" asks Lao Tzu. Why should we not take it as the nature of the person? Understand the difference for many things depend upon it: Why should we not consider the capability of a person as his characteristic and why should we make it a quality-measure?

A man is proficient in mathematics. This proficiency is his nature. One man is proficient in music; this is his nature. Now one man is weak in mathematics – that is his disposition. There is nothing great about a mathematical genius for he has attained this quality from nature. And it is no disqualification for a man to be weak in mathematics for that again is what he has attained from nature in the same way.

The Zen Fakir Rinzai was telling a man as he stood outside his hut. "Do you see those trees reaching the skies and do you see these shrubs yonder?" "It is years," he says, "Since I live near these trees

and never have I once heard the shrubs wondering why the trees are so tall! Nor have I ever seen the tall trees looking down haughtily at the tiny shrubs!" "What is the secret?" His companion asked him. "The secret is only this," said Rinzai "that the trees are trees because nature made them so and the shrubs are shrubs for the same reason." No status is achieved by being big and there is no loss of face in being small. The same nature that makes the trees tall, makes the grass weeds small. It is also not always necessary that those that are big are big in all respects. When the storm comes, the big trees are uprooted whereas the lowly weed is left unharmed.

Napoleon was a short man. He was not tall. But it invariably happens that men of short stature aspire to great heights. One day he was trying to remove a book from a shelf in his library. His hand could not reach so his attendant who was 7 feet tall said, "Sir, if it is does not seem improper may I step ahead and bring the book out for you? I am the highest man in your army. There is no one higher than me," Napoleon was red with fury. "You are not higher, you are only taller. There may be no one taller than you but I alone am the highest."

It was but natural that Napoleon was hurt. The fault was not only of the language – it was avery big mistake. Napoleon corrected him immediately – tallest not highest. What is the difference? To be tall is a natural phenomena. With height there is valuation, quality, grade. There is no valuation with tallness for that is a gift of nature but with the question of height, of stature, valuation comes in

Lao Tzu says, "If there is no quality-grade with talent, there would be no strifes and no struggles." Would that we would begin to see that things have their own specific nature and act accordingly; and they are not responsible for their natural characteristics! We never hold a blind man responsible for his blindness? Even if he is blind from birth we sympathise with him.

About two years ago, a blind boy came to see me in Jabalpur, all the way from Srinagar. There was a Shivir held there on Mahavira. He came to know of it much later and so missed, so he came all the way to Jabalpur. "You must have found it very difficult to travel the long distance from Srinagar to Jabalpur?" I asked him. "Not at all!" He replied "Blindness is a great asset to me. Everybody is ready to help. One person catches hold of my hand, another buys a ticket for me. Why, the rickshaw-man brought me all the way from station, free of charge and is waiting outside to drop me back to the station. If I had eyes, I could not have been better off."

If some one is blind we are all sympathy for him. We feel it is not his fault but if someone is dull, we do not sympathise with him. On the contrary, we call him an idiot! We never ever wait and ponder how he is at fault if he is dull? The poor man is criticised and looked down upon. Everywhere he will be ill-treated and pushed back. No one will ever be kind to him. Why? Because we have made the intellect our sutra for ambition. Without intellect we cannot progress in ambition. Therefore the measure of intellect, the I.Q. Has become very important.

But what is behind all this? One man is born an Einstein, what is Einstein's qualification in that? He has not brought about his genius. One man is born an idiot – what is his fault in that?

Lao Tzu says, "Nature makes one person in one way and another in another. It is because we do not accept nature and attribute quality-status to one and quality-deficiency to the other that we give birth to all struggle and rivalry." This means we are unable to see what is natural, what is the characteristic qualities of a person. We pile our expectations on to nature and think accordingly.

Lao Tzu believes in 'Nature-ism'. He believes in the natural characteristics. Tao means the natural disposition. "I am such", he says, "not only this but also that the other is such." "Then this would mean, we must accept the thief, as a thief, a cheat as a cheat for nature has made them so?" We might argue, "If nature has made them so, what can be done? Should we accept fraud and let it work its way in life?"

This is the fight between Lao Tzu and the moralist. The moralist would undoubtedly say that this sutra is dangerous. Suppose we go even so far as to accept that one man is an idiot, one man is a genius and nature has made them so; but if a man is a fraud, if he is a thief, a murderer, what are we to do? Should we accept them as being created such by nature? If you ask Lao Tzu, he will say, "When you did not accept them for what they are, how many murderers did you reform? How many cheats did you convert into honest men? You punished the male-factor by whipping him, putting him in jail and even executing him. Were you able to reform people this way?"

"The truth is," says Lao Tzu, "When you punish a person, you make him stronger in his short-comings." You never rid him of his fault, you only make him more competent. The person who visits the jail once, becomes a jail-bird by and by, for there he gets just the company he wants. He finds enough education on his craft. He comes across master-criminals and others with greater experience than him. So his knowledge of his art improves. Also, if once a man is branded a criminal, you stamp a seal on him. Then be has no way also, of improving his ways. Even if he means to be honest, no one will accept him. Lao Tzu says, "You cannot make a saint out of a sinner."

In England, about 150 years ago, thieves were punished by being flogged in the market-square. Large crowds would gather to witness the flogging. This was done with a view to discourage others from stealing. Soon it was discovered that as the crowd was engaged in watching the spectacle, many pockets were picked!

This was discussed in the British Parliament. When an example was being set to dissuade people from stealing, at that very time pockets were being picked! In spite of all the punishments, we have not been able to change man in the least. He is getting worse and worse everyday. According to Lao Tzu: as the laws increase, the law-breakers increase also. Every new law becomes a sutra to create new criminals. Every sentence creates a new crime. Lao Tzu says, "You may keep saying 'What will happen to man if he does not change!' The fact remains you have not changed a single man." The number of courts and jails and the numerous law-books have failed miserably. But it seems some people's self-interest is hidden behind this.

I have heard that a thief was convicted for the third time. This is the last, for he has been sentenced for life. After he read out the sentence, the judge asked him, "You took birth in this world and what has been your contribution towards it?" "Don't you know?" The thief replied, "Because of me how many judges and lawyers and detectives and police earn their living? They would be out of job but for me. You too would be begging on the streets had it not been for me!"

This is not merely a joke. This is a truth – a deep truth. If there is no thief on the face of this earth, how would the magistrate be? All this elaborate arrangement carrying so much status and dignity about it, depends entirely on thieves, cheats and men of the underworld. If we look deep with in these people, we shall find that all this class of law-givers would not be happy to hear Lao Tzu. They

will argue, "Then it means accept a thief as a thief. Do nothing about it. Then what will happen to the law-givers?" And the most interesting thing that the psychologists have discovered is that only those people become law-givers, who would be the first to break all laws if these were removed. In fact, only the thief takes pleasure in flogging a thief.

Nasruddin was working in a shop but he did not behave well with the customers. So he was turned out. The owner of the shop told him, "You are being thrown out because your behaviour towards the customers is bad. Remember, the law says, 'the customer is always right'. So it will not do here if you are always trying to prove yourself right and the customer wrong." Fifteen days after, the shop-owner found Nasruddin standing on the cross-roads dressed as a police-man. He asked him, "Nasruddin you have become a police-man?" "Yes" said Nasruddin. "This is the only job I found where the customer is always wrong."

Lao Tzu's statements are difficult to understand and follow. Not only the judiciary but also the sadhu find it ungratifying for the Sadhu considers his piety to be a cultivated quality and not a part of his nature. He says, "With great penance and sadhana and with arduous practice, I have attained piety. You are not a sadhu for you have done nothing." But Lao Tzu's piety and goodness are supreme. He says, "If I am a good man, it is no attainment on my part, I deserve no credit for it. If you are not a good man you deserve no contempt. My being good is my nature, you not being good is your nature." What can we do where there is a question of nature? So no one is high and no one is low.

Our sadhu's endeavour however is, on being at the top. If he is not above us, all his efforts are in vain. If we stop reverence of our sadhus and giving them pride of place,99 out of 100 sadhus. will immediately disappear; for respect and reverence is their only mainstay. Their piety is nourishment for their ambition, their ego and their pride. It is very gratifying to be a sadhu and when the society is particularly sinful, saintliness pays great dividends, for then your ego, your ambition and your pride get the best nourishment.

A sadhu never approves of Lao Tzu. Therefore, the words of Lao Tzu proved very revolutionary for China. Even now after 2,500 years, they are revolutionary and 2,500 years hence also, they will be revolutionary. There is no greater revolution than the Lao Tzu philosophy. Lao Tzu says, "I am like the bitter leaf of the neem tree. It is no fault of the neem tree that its leaves are bitter! The mango bears sweet fruit, what is the greatness of the mango tree in that? Why should the neem be rated low and the mango rated high? Even if one is more useful to you than the other, it is no criterion to judge."

We should understand the opposition of the judiciary, the politician and the moralists. Their argument is, that society will fall still lower but they do not realise that society has already fallen low and can go no lower. The society is degenerated – not will be.

Lao Tzu however says, "It is you who have caused the society to be degenerated. You revile a thief and destroy the possibility of his changing." You shut all doors of reform. In fact, whenever you praise or condemn, you create boundaries. Then as we create these boundaries of praise and condemnation, we force the evil-doer to remain an evil-doer and constrain a good man to develop hypocrisy in order to maintain an appearance of continued goodness. We leave no place for him to be evil for no man is so good that there is no trace of evil in him and no man so bad that there is no good in him.

We tend to break everything into two. We say, "This man is good, there is no evil in him, and no man so bad that there is no good in him."

We tend to break everything into two. We say, "This man is good, there is no evil in him." Then when some part of evil begins to manifest itself in his life, he will have to practise some deceit. He will try to hide and suppress what is within him and begins to exhibit what is not within him. This our endeavour to praise goodness, turns it into hypocrisy. That is why 99

In the same manner, when we call a person bad, we close all doors of improvement for him. Constant condemnation kills all his possible expectation to improve. He feels himself in capable of taking any step in that direction. He looks upon himself as a person fated for damnation. Then slowly the thought gets strengthened within him. "Then why should I not be an expert in my badness?" This then becomes his life-adventure.

Lao Tzu says, "Do not call the bad, wicked, nor the good, good. Put no labels. Just know this, that each man lives according to his nature." What is the meaning of this?

This means, there should be no category no hierarchy in Society. There should be no high and no low. Does this mean there should be communism? This needs to be understood a little. The type of society Lao Tzu talks about, if it is accepted that way, then all people will be uncommon and each person will be according to his nature. Therefore, there will be no feeling of inequality.

Lao Tzu says, "If a man is capable of earning, he will earn and if a man is capable of losing, he will lose and if a man is capable of begging only, he will beg." But in no way will the beggar be lesser than the rich man, for we give the latter no grade of status. We say, it is the nature of this man that he cannot stay without constructing a palace. Another man's nature is, he cannot keep the money he has. He cannot help squandering it. This is his nature. But we make no differentiation. We accept the disposition of each person and respect it. In truth, the chief mark of a sadhu is, that he accepts all – all kinds of dispositions and characteristics.

If such a possibility happens that we accept all types of dispositions, there will no longer be strifes and struggles.

I was talking to a friend yesterday. There is a conflict between him and his wife. As is natural, he thought if he had married another woman there would not have been this state of affairs. Now this man has no experience of another woman. She exists only in imagination. The wife also feels the same way. She feels she has made a wrong choice. Another man would have made a better husband. In this case also, there is no experience of the other man. He is purely imaginary. Now we cannot have the experience of all the women in the world or all the men in the world, therefore, the illusion persists.

I told my friend, "It is not a question of this woman or that woman. It is a question of your different natures. There is conflict in your dispositions. And it is the arrangement between a man and a woman that society has prescribed that is to be blamed for this, for it is an arrangement of ownership. Wherever we make permanent relationships, strife is bound to be, for the mind is most impermanent and relationships very permanent.

Today I may tell a person, "No one is more beautiful than you," but it is not necessary that I should say the same thing tomorrow. Perhaps I do not feel that way tomorrow? This does not mean that what I said was false. It was absolutely true and that belonged to the moment when I felt it as such. But this moment cannot put my whole future in bondage. Tomorrow I may feel that was a mistake: that could also be the truth for that moment. Then what shall I do that moment?

Will I betray the truth of the initial moment or will I conjure up a fraud? If I put up an act, there will be conflict. I will fall in my own esteem for the hypocrisy I create! Wherever we fix relationships, the unstable mind causes trouble. Wherever there is demand, there is bound to be conflict. If a person finds himself on the highest rung, he will strive his hardest to remain there and so always be in the midst of a struggle. One who is low, will always try to reach high and so there will be struggle All our thinking is conflict-oriented.

We can only be rid of conflict if we accept the nature of things. Now what is meant by the nature of things?

The nature of things is such that if I love someone and derive happiness therefrom, I shall also derive unhappiness from the same person. This is inevitable. If you derive happiness from a person, you must also suffer unhappiness from him. We derive happiness from that person alone from whom we can also derive unhappiness. The door to unhappiness opens along with the door to happiness. Happiness an unhappiness both come from the same door. When I accept happiness and deny unhappiness, I am not accepting the nature of things. Then I say, happiness is alright but I do not accept unhappiness. Now I shall be angry also with the person I love. Conversely, one who loves me can also be angry with me. But we think, one can never be angry with the person one loves.

Where there is love, anger is also born. It is bound to be and if it is not, the quality of that love will be different. The very element of that love changes. Then it is not love but Compassion. But compassion does not satisfy you for compassion is serene love, non-insisting. You are gratified only by passionate and aggressive love. Then you feel, someone is out to win you. Now this is an interesting thing that you feel very happy when someone is out of to win you but when that someone wins you, you feel intense pain. When someone is out to win you, you get pleasure out of the thought that you are worth striving for but when you are won over. you feel the intense pain of the fact that now you are subservient to somebody. Both these are conjoined.

If we keep the nature of things in mind, there can be no struggle or conflict. What is conflict?

Conflict means I am trying every minute to be against my nature. I am busy trying to be what I cannot be. With others also our effort is the same – we want them to be what they cannot be.

I can love a woman only if the woman appeals to me. The woman might think I love her for herself. She does not know that it is the woman in her I love. I can love another woman the same way I love her. Therefore you find that as soon as you fall in love with a woman, she at once begins to keep an eye over you for she knows the weakness of man's mind. The mind does not acknowledge a person, it only acknowledges energies. It knows no particular A man or B woman. It only knows in terms of man and woman.

Now this woman you have won, will always try to see that you do not fall for another woman. But the day this love for a woman departs from your mind, even this one you love will have to depart. And

then the conflict is terrible. Now her effort will be that you should love woman but only the woman within her, which is impossible. Only pain and anguish results from this.

Everywhere this happens.

Voltaire has written in his memoirs that he used to wish that when he went along the road, someone should wish him, recognise him. But nobody did for no one knew him. This used to pain him. So he worked hard and at last reached the place he aspired to. But now it became impossible for him to walk along the road! Then Voltaire writes, "Now these people do not allow me to sleep also! I cannot go out alone for a walk. Someone or the other turns up and starts talking."

Then he continues to write that on pondering over this, he realised that it was he alone who was responsible for this. These poor people never wished him first and this pained him. Now that crowds gather round him wherever he goes, that also is troublesome.

Oh, the mind of man! We ask for troubles and when they come, we are distressed by them. First man aspires for status, when he gets it he hankers to be alone. Now to aspire for status and fame means aspiring for crowds. Then as soon as the crowds gather, he is suffocated! Hitler used to see that great crowds gathered around him, but when they did he used to try and evade them.

This is a most interesting thing: those who have not gathered crowds are distressed and those who have, they too are distressed, Lao Tzu says, "It is because we do not accept nature that we experience this difficulty." And this also we do not see, that many more things come together with one thing. They cannot be dropped out. I take great precautions to see that no one insult me. But where there is reverence, irreverence is bound to be. But this we do not see. If we can see this part of nature, then Lao Tzu says, "If you do not wish for insult, do not wish for respect either." If you aspire for honour be ready for dishonour also. Then there is no difficulty, then there is no conflict within.

Another fact: If there is conflict within one person, there is bound to be conflict in the whole community. If each person is engaged in a fight within himself for all the 24 hours, then what we know as life cannot be life. What do we do all the 24 hours? We are fighting wars – in the market we fight financial wars, at home we fight domestic wars, there is politics even between friends. If we take into account a single day's life of a person for a period of his waking hours, we will find he has been doing nothing but fight all day long. Only he changes his fronts many times according to where he is; he fights on one front and goes to another. When he has finished with this, he forms a third front and so on. He may feel a little respite in the interval between two fronts – all else is war! When after a full day he sleeps in the night, then also the wars continue. His dreams are invaded by his day-long strifes. What is the cause of this conflict-ridden state of mind?

Could it be that we are poisoning the very roots of the human race? For this alone can bring about such state of affairs. And this is the reason – that we are poisoning our very roots. This planned scheme is so old that it has become a part of our collective mind. It seems now it is impossible to live in any other way. This is a snare of our own making.

If you were to get a chance to be tranquil for a full day, you will become so restless – more than you normally are when in conflict. People say they want peace because they do not know what

peace is. If they are given peace, within 24 hours they will say ”Forgive us, we do not want peace.” Restlessness appears a thousand times better than this peace! The reason is that in moments of peace your ego drops.

Ego can remain only in conflict, in struggle, in winning and losing. Even losing is preferred for at least the ego in there. It is better even to lose rather than be nobody, the ego at least remains. In complete tranquility the ego cannot be, for you yourself cannot be. In perfect tranquility, only tranquility – remains. You are no more. This is very disturbing. You will come quickly out of this and then you will ask for peace no longer! Hell would seem better than this, for at least you were doing something – something was happening! Whether anything was happening or not, is irrelevant – things seemed to happen. You were busy, occupied; and the mind felt very important – you were doing something great!

The greater the conflict, the more you feel you are doing something big. Therefore people discard smaller conflicts and search for bigger ones. They let go small troubles and look for bigger ones. If there is not enough material for conflict in our own house, we start probing into our neighbour’s affairs, or even that of our society, our country, our nation. We look for bigger troubles of the human race.

An American youth of the Peace Corps came to me. He is one of the 400 who have come to India to establish peace. He took sannyas. I asked him, ”Is it not to save yourself from your own restlessness that you are trying for peace for others?” He was taken aback. ”What do you say? You are absolutely right but how did you know? There is so much conflict in my family! I can’t get on with my father, I cannot get on with my mother or my brothers. Things had reached such a peak that there would have been bloodshed. Either I would have killed my father or he would have killed me! Therefore it was necessary to run away from home. I heard there was need for peace in India so I joined the Peace Corps and came here. Ever since then I have plunged whole-heartedly in to my work.”

All the organisations that are out to serve society, also all reformers and leaders, are those who are not satisfied with lesser conflicts. They look for bigger spans and amplitudes. And they look for problems that defy solutions. You cannot dwell longer on problems that are easily solved, you have to then move on the fresh problems. So we look for permanent problems that can never be solved. We are people who have no knowledge of tranquility and whose whole make-up is of restlessness. We create restlessness with each movement of ours – sitting, standing, walking, talking. Even our silence is filled with restlessness.

Nasruddin is talking to his wife. She has already been talking for half an hour. Nasruddin said, ”You have been talking continuously for half an hour. I could not get in a single syllable!” His wife said, ”You are silent but your silence is so aggressive, I cannot stand it!”

A man can look aggressive even when he is sitting quietly. Your keeping quiet may be a lot worse than if you had given an abuse. Our very being is one of conflict. Therefore our merely sitting quiet also becomes aggressive. You may say, ”I’m sitting silent, not saying a word” but your not speaking also does the trick. You normally do not speak when you have to say something more dangerous than words can express. Then you become silent for you do not have words that weigh so much as to express your feelings. Why is it like this?

According to Lao Tzu, this is because we have not given our acquiescence to nature. We have played games with nature, the game of quality – grades. We say, "So and so is low, so and so is high in standing." This is according to our utility needs. We give higher standards to things which seem more useful to us but when utility changes, this ranking of high and low also changes.

There was a time when the family priest held the pride of place. Why? Because he had his uses. When the clouds thundered and lightning flashed, no one but the priest knew why it was so – Indra was angry! Now how was he to be appeased? Only he had an answer to this. He knew the mantras to cool Indra's anger. So even the king sat at his feet. This is why the PUROHITS (family priests) tried very hard to protect their knowledge from others. Their knowledge was their monopoly. Even the kings came to ask of them. They also touched the feet of the purohit. So the family priest was at the very top once upon a time.

Today, however, it is not so and in twenty years time, the scientist will take the place that belonged to the purohit 2,000 years ago. Today, the scientist is invaluable for on him depends the destiny of Man. If one scientist is smuggled out of Germany or Russia that would change the history of the world!

Today if America is so prosperous and well-established it is because 90

But how can they stop them? They have no such big institutions, nor such arrangement for work nor such high salaries to pay. Nor do they enjoy such freedom and have such conveniences to work. Even if he is not allowed to leave his country, the scientist will not give his best and will always try to migrate to America.

Those who know, are watching with open eyes and they know that the future lies in the hands of that country where the scientists are gathering. Today the scientist wields power.

And it may seem that the power is in the hands of the politician but it is not so. Everything is under the scientists' command. The politicians may keep complaining that it is no use going to the moon, people may die of hunger, but the scientist insists of going to the moon and the politicians have to make arrangements for him.

If today the five topmost scientists of America refuse to work, America will be at the feet of Russia. Five men yield such power! The utility has changed and brought the scientist in the place of the family priest.

In between, it was the warrior who was at the top. The sword was above everything.

Where utility changes, everything, all other arrangements, have to change with it. Today intellect is of great value for it helps you to rise up but if in the near future, we are able to produce machines that can do all the work that man does, than there will be no further use of intellect. Then it is possible that the flute-player or the fisherman or the card-player may come to the top. And you, who are running big stores and markets – no one will even look at you! These people who know the art to relax, will be the people in demand. He who can be blissful in rest will become valuable.

Those who work, will lose their value, for machines will prove better workers. Now a great scientist has to do complicated mathematics, but where he takes six months to solve a problem, the computer

takes six seconds. So a computer will be as good as a scientist and he will no longer be important. Then the whole situation will change. A very different class of people will now be at the top – The entertainer's.

In today's world you see that the film star enjoys a position he never did before, though dramas and plays always existed. He was not only unrecognised but looked down upon. It was not supposed to be respectful work but suddenly we find he has risen high in esteem and day by day he will rise higher! As people find themselves idle, without any work, they will need more and more of entertainment. They will need something to keep their minds engaged – some dance, some song, some drama, which will fill up their empty hours. So the actor will rise higher and higher. He has already relegated the politician to a lower position in public appeal. But why is this so?

This again is a problem of utility. There was a time when the actor was scarce. One or two funsters, existed in each village. They were not heeded much, but who could have said then that this lonely funster will one day become Charlie Chaplin and even Gandhiji would be eager to meet him? These men were supposed to be the worthless types. Each village had them and made use of them on occasions like marriage or for some important occasion in the village to add a lighter side to the function. Nobody respected them. Then how is it that they have risen in esteem? As the value for work decreases, the value of relaxation rises. It is the utility that decides who should be at the top and who should not be.

By nature, no one is high or low. Lao Tzu says, "By nature, you are as you are." If we once accept this fact then there is no strife, no struggle, either within or without.

If no importance is given to things that are hard to attain, people will be rid of thieving and pilfering. We always condemn the thief, the bandit, the cheat, the trickster but do we ever think what it is they are after? The things they desire are getting more and more expensive each day so the lure for them increases – and we condemn them! It is a strange play, a foul deception!

On the one hand we give a place of prestige to the Kohinoor diamond and on the other, condemn the efforts that go on to attain it. Now this Kohinoor is one and people are in millions! And they all hanker after Kohinoor. Everybody cannot have it, so it is impossible to attain it lawfully. Now everyday we see that those who break the law, they alone attain the thing which is otherwise unattainable. The Kohinoor is open to view; people stand in queues. The law-breaker scoffs at them for according to him they are fools who do not know that he who wants to break the queue and get the diamond, exhorts others to respect the queue.

I have heard that a magistrate once reprimanded a thief saying "Are you not ashamed to deceive such a good man?" The thief replied, "Your honour, it is impossible to cheat a cheat." To them, honesty is their mainstay. So the trickster always wishes that there is a publicity of honesty or else their business will suffer. If honesty prevails then alone dishonesty can work or else it cannot.

Machiavelli or Chanakya are the absolute opposite of Lao Tzu. They are the opposite pole of Lao Tzu. Machiavelli says "Preach honesty, then only dishonesty will prosper. Tell people to be simple to be plain and undeceitful, then only will you succeed."

In his book "THE PRINCE", Machiavelli has advised the kings that a king should be such who encourages morality in his subjects but does not practise it himself. Otherwise he says, what is the

gain? He advises them never to be moral, for if they are, some one else will take advantage of the situation. They should be promoters of ethics and keep all outside appearances. But be alert and never practise morality for it is immorality that always prospers in life.

This man is just the opposite of Lao Tzu. He is a great intellectual and presents one face of man as it really is – this much we must allow him. Machiavelli has a deep insight within man and what he says about man is true to a great extent – 99

On the one-hand we are increasing our infatuations and allurements of rare objects. Now on the other hand, can we visualize an Adivasi (backward tribe) settlement, where the Kohinoor would lie on the streets and the children would play games with it? Nobody would care to pick it up for there is no intrinsic value as such of the Kohinoor. The value it enjoys is endowed on it. It is of no use; it cannot be eaten or drunk or put to any use. It is a thoroughly useless object. Its only quality is, it is one of its kind. There is only one Kohinoor.

If we give a value to a rare thing, the world goes mad after it. It can happen that a man might gamble away his lie just to attain the Kohinoor! Now this diamond in itself is completely useless but the dignity and glory conferred on its being a rare thing gives rise to robbery, deceit and competition in the world. Now for instance, gold – what is the intrinsic value of gold? It fulfils no requirement of life. If you place a piece of bread and a piece of gold before an animal, the animal will pick up the bread and go his way; he is wise. But if the same alternative is placed before a man, he invariably will pick up the piece of gold and run.

And the most interesting fact is, no one – no creature – is prepared to choose the gold except Man! The reason is simple. It has no intrinsic value; the value it enjoys has been given to it and we have accepted its value. If today we do not accept it as valuable it will become valueless!

Values are established in a thousand ways in the world; sometimes such values, you would not dream of! Now an African woman fills her arms with bangles of bones. She sees your hands and says, ”What nakedness – nothing in the hands?” Now for instance you see a Western woman and wonder at their bare hands and bare ears and nose. These are all values that have been given – and there are strange values attached to things!

If a society feels long hair is the criterion of beauty, then long hair become beautiful; if it considers short hair or even shaven heads as a sign of beauty then that becomes the order of the day. There are places yet on the surface of the earth, where shaven heads are a sign of beauty. You may be shocked but it is so. They believe that unless the hair is not removed, the actual beauty of the face cannot be gauged. According to them hair deceives. It hides a beautiful face and covers an ugly one. This is their criterion, that only without hair can you gauge the intrinsic beauty of a woman. The beauty that appears by the hair-styles is not genuine, it is deceitful. These are given valuations.

It is difficult for us to understand how a shaven head could lend beauty to a face because the valuation that we have decided for ourselves is different. There is a tribe in Africa where big hanging lips are considered beautiful and every effort is made to increase the size of the lips. The more the lip hangs, the more beautiful it is considered to be. Women born with hanging lips are considered beautiful from birth! If anyone is born in such a way in our country, he would be considered downright ugly.

What is ugliness, what is beauty? These are all our given valuations. Which things do we value? We give value to a stone and it becomes precious. We give value to a mettle and it becomes precious. Verily we give value to things that are rare. If a thing is not rare, then no matter how valuable it is, the very fact that it is easily available reduces its value. Rarity creates the value.

Lao Tzu says, "If rare commodities are not given importance the element of theft can be eradicated." Then no one will be a thief or a dishonest person. Remember, no dishonesty is required to live life but if you aspire to rise above others, dishonesty becomes necessary. Honesty is enough, just to live and if everyone makes an effort just to live, there is no need of dishonesty. But if you want to rise above mere living, if you aspire not bread alone but also Kohinoor, then honesty is not enough. Honesty cannot get you the Kohinoor; you will have to be dishonest. It is also an interesting fact, that the rarer the thing, the more dishonest you will have to be. Now for instance, we are all here. If everyone sits in his own place, there is no quarrel but if all of you try to occupy my chair there will be chaos. Also the rowdiest one will succeed in capturing the chair.

Now if we decide that to sit on this chair is the goal of life, then there will be nothing but struggle, rowdyism and dishonesty in this room. The one who manages to capture the seat will also not be able to sit in peace for there will be others pulling at his legs always, trying to bring him down. So he will only appear as sitting. Actually, he will also be always in a constant state of strain and stress for he fears he might be brought down any moment by others who will keep trying to get at the chair in the same way.

Lao Tzu's insight is very profound. He says "Give no significance to things that are not easily available." That is, give no importance to things that are rare and there shall be no theft, no dishonesty in the world. By punishing the thief, theft cannot be eradicated, by preaching and sermonizing the robber. you cannot end robbery and by frightening the trickster with the terrors of hell dishonesty will not end. Give no importance to rare things and all these will end. Just think this over.

Whenever you have been dishonest or whenever you have committed a theft or wanted to commit a theft you have never done so purely for the sake of living; rather for something more than living. You may have tried to delude yourself that it was necessary for life but it is always for something more than life. You may have done it to obtain a good shirt; dishonesty is not necessary to cover the body. He who is interested in only covering his body will never be dishonest. Such a man, if need be, will even be ready to go about naked also someday but will never be ready to be dishonest. But if merely covering the body is not enough and with what it covered is of more importance, then honesty alone will not do. The meaning of Lao Tzu's sutra is that Life, Existence alone, does not accept dishonesty as necessary. It is only our tendency to give significance to things that are rare that spreads the whole web of dishonesty.

Therefore remember, the more backward a community, the less dishonest it is and the reason for it is only this, that whatever that community values is easily available. Now there are these Adivasis. They value food, a loin-cloth, kerosene and these are all easily available. In some houses there is one lantern burning and in some there are two but this does not make them restless for the amount of work done is the same, whether the lanterns are two or one. Their desires are not more than this. There is no such thing they desire for which they may have to sell their souls.

Remember we have to sell our souls to attain the rare thing. For it is not available by toil. No one can

ever dream that if he works honestly each day for eight hours, some day he will find the Kohinoor in his wife's necklace! This is something that even Mahavira or Buddha cannot think of. The most noble of men can never claim that by living simply and artlessly, he can attain the Kohinoor to adorn his wife's neck. The Kohinoor adorns the neck of the person who is ready to cut a million necks. When there is only one diamond and millions aspiring for it, the matter cannot be so simple.

But we always give value to the rare objects. Our method of evaluation is such. The lesser a thing is available the more valuable it is supposed to be. The availability of a thing does not add or subtract from the quality of the thing. The criterion should actually be the other way round.

I have heard that Abraham Lincoln had a dream one night. He saw himself passing though a big crowd and people were looking at him and whispering into each other's ears. He could hear them say, "Such an ordinary looking person, where was the need to make him the President of America?" Lincoln is upset. He did not know what to do. The whisperings went on and he could hear the same thing being repeated again and again. "Could they not find a better-looking person to hold such a high post?" Lincoln became so uneasy that he woke up. He could not sleep the rest of the night.

In the morning he wrote in his diary about this dream and also his answer to it. He says, "I believe there is a reason to select me the President. The faces that god creates in a very small number, I feel He does not like them. Therefore I feel he prefers ordinary faces, for he creates them in such large numbers! An ordinary face is God's choice. The extraordinary faces happen to be created by mistake sometimes or else they would have been in large numbers."

Lincoln has written jokingly but that which is created in large quantities should be the basis of life. But we do otherwise. The type of features that generally people have are of no value to us. They should be such as not all have – then it becomes valuable. Thus we give rise to strife and struggle and begin a race for the uncommon which makes people mad. And this rat-race then has no end! This is not in one thing but in everything in life.

If their minds are not attracted towards those things that are desirable, their hearts will become non distressed. If we do not draw the minds of people toward things that awaken desire, their minds will not be distressed and despondent. The storms of restlessness will not rise within them and their hearts will be tranquil and silent. But what we do is to goad them on towards the peak of the Everest. Nothing on the ground seems worth attaining. So we say, "Go to the peaks of Everest as Tensing and Hillary did. Reach there and plant your flag then you will have done something or else you have lived in vain!"

What fruitful purpose has planting a flag on the Everest served in life, is what puzzles me! Tomorrow, when many people begin to alight on the Gourishankar by plane, what will be the value of your having planted the flag there? Neither Gourishankar is important, nor the planting of flag there. The value is of rarity. Now when a lone man, an Armstrong, steps on the moon, he makes news all over the world. In one moment, a man who performs an unattainable task, reaches the top, where a man who toils honestly for recognition, would reach after 50 years. Then too, it is not certain.

Do not think that the day you land on the moon, you will make history. You will not, for you will reach when it is easy and convenient for people to go there. In Japan, a company is selling tickets to the moon! It promises to take the passengers to the moon on the 1st of January 1975. The advance

booking ;s on and people are buying tickets. But if they feel they too will become famous, they are mistaken The significance is always of the rarity of the situation. Armstrong was the first human being to step on the moon that is the only value, nothing else.

Wherever we turn, we find we value things only when its availability is less or almost impossible. Thus we give rise to strife and conflict for everyone sets out to attain it and in the process they become despondent and filled with distress. And those who do achieve realise after achieving that they have not achieved anything at all! If you go and stand on the moon, what will you get? The soil is not such different from the earth. What will you attain, what inner achievement will you attain? None whatsoever. Now those who have not reached will die of despondency. They will feel that till they reach the moon, everything else is useless. They will think they were born in vain, for they could not reach the moon.

The seeds that are sown within us from childhood are like this mania for reaching the moon. Now the difficulty is, if you reach there you find you have achieved nothing and if you do not, you die of disappointment, you suffer the agony of non-fulfillment. Those who have reached had to pass through a lot of stress and strain and difficulties. Those who have not reached, also live through a lot of conflict and ultimately die. Nothing is attained by reaching but in the effort of reaching a great deal is lost. You lose the opportunity oS life from where the rays of bliss could have emanated.

All this stress of Lao Tzu is negative, not only so that you may not be despondent, that is not the meaning. What he means is, that if you are not despondent, then the state of non-despondency, will open the gates of positive bliss. The individual who has entered the rat-race of achieving the rare commodity, misses this opportunity that is open to all.

Perhaps we do not seek God because the saints say, God is everywhere. Then He is no longer desirable for they say, he is in every grain, in every particle, all around! Then it seems useless to look for Him. Had He been somewhere far away. where only one in a million can reach, then perhaps all humanity would have set out for Him and even made Him their goal!

So it is the saints who with their very hands make God undesirable. He is everywhere, they say, wherever you see, it is He. Whether you attain Him ar whether you don't, He is always around you. Whether you know or whether you don't, He is always around you as the ocean surrounds the fish. Then the mind argues, "Where is the sense in attaining a thing that is so near always?" Such an useless thing is not worth striving for – a thing which is always with you, whether you sleep or wake or even if you run away it is with you. So if it is always with you, there is no point in seeking it.

We will set out to seek that which is not everywhere. We will seek that which is rare and found only sometimes somewhere by a very few. And those who attain, become figures of history. Then where is the sense in wasting your life in the pursuit of God?

Now even if you attain God a person like Buddha will say, "What is so great about it? He is already attained!" Mahavir will say, "So what if you attained? It is your very nature!" So Lao Tzu says also there is no need to give it in the papers. Thousands have attained and thousands will attain him. There is no need to be proud, there is no need to be made with joy. There is no need to plant a flag! God has forever been attained and he stands ready by the side of those who have not attained also. As soon as they become aware, they too will attain!" This way no desire is created.

If God does not become our search, it is only because he does not become our desire. The desire does not arise within us as it would if we had to snatch Him from others and attain Him. This is another disadvantage. The satisfaction of attaining something only comes when it is snatched from someone. Otherwise, it does not seems worth it. God is such a thing, that no matter how much of Him you attain, no one is the poorer for it. It is not as if your attainment will put me into difficulty. It is not that if you have attained it prevents me from attaining. No; no matter how much you attain, He is still as much open to me for attainment. Your attainment makes no difference to my attainment. The Saints say: "He is infinite!" No matter how much He is attained, He yet remains much more to be attained. Now, when there is no sense of competition, the guest for God seems useless to us. There is no gratification of snatching from others. Ah, the relish, the joy, of depriving someone! When we snatch a thing, remember it is not the joy of owning the thing but the gratification of having deprived another of it, which is so satisfying. It is the joy of causing pains to others.

If supposing, Kohinoor is scattered like pebbles on the road, found in each and every house, the Queen will at once pull it off her neck and throw it away as useless. The very thought that even a beggar owns it, is enough to make it meaningless. It was the thought that no one had it, that was the joy of owning it. We arouse our longings and desires for even the most insignificant of things.

One more thing needs to be understood in this context. Just as the judiciary are against the first sutra of Lao Tzu, so the economists oppose the second sutra of Lao Tzu. Actually, the economists say that the very law of economics is that there is conflict for the rare, for that which is not available in big quantities.

In fact only that thing has economic value, which is less. Therefore there is no price on air or on water in the villages. Sometimes ago, even land had no value. After some time even air will have a price because now oxygen is getting less day by day. The population has increased so much that within the next 50 years only those who can afford it, will carry their oxygen about in boxes. The poor will have to go a begging for air.

It will not be strange then if people knock at your door and ask for a loan of oxygen. He may ask to take a few puffs from your box!

Oxygen is so much less in the atmosphere of New York, that scientists wonder how people live there. The proportion of poisonous gases is becoming so alarming that it will be impossible to remain alive for long. Thus you see, that air will become valuable. There never used to be price on water. Fifty years ago milk used to be free. As soon as a thing begins to get deficient in quantity, ib value increases. All science of economics is based on deficit. The correct meaning of value is – the price of a thing depends on the lack of its availability. The price shows how non-available a thing is. A thing is in short supply and its price rises. The greater availability of a thing the lesser is its value.

It is therefore, that America had to throw away millions of bales of cloth into the sea. So much of cloth was produced that the price of cloth would have fallen very low. So that the prices may remain stable, they had to do this or it would have affected the home-market adversely. And millions of people go naked in the world! But the science of economics requires that this should be done or else the economy will fall.

If Lao Tzu had his way, there would be no economics in the world and no science of economics. For Lao Tzu says, "Why do you attach value to the deficient? Set your eyes on that which is in plenty."

Give value and place to that which is easily available to all. Do not heed that which is in short supply. If one person sports a diamond, do not heed him. Let word go round that there is a mad man in town who wears a stone round his neck. Ingrain this into the minds of children and let them notice the futility and stupidity of this man. Then this world can be made desireless. We can then take man's mind away from restlessness and into a world of peace and tranquility.

Lao Tzu used to say, "I have heard that in the times of my father and grandfather, they could hear the bark of dogs across the river. There was some village there. When the skies were clear, they could see the smoke of the fires burning in the houses of those people. But nobody from his village went across to find out who stayed there. People were so filled with peace that they did not take unnecessary disturbances upon themselves. How did it concern them, who stayed there? They heard their dogs and saw the smoke rising from their fires. That was more than enough to show that there were people across the river. But no one was so inquisitive as to try to know more."

And here we are! We will not rest till we find out everything about all the stars and planets!

Deep within, this matter depends entirely on our state of distress or non-distress. He who is filled with distress will always be on the run. He will run at the slightest excuse. He who is non-distressed, will keep sitting. He will be tranquil and still under circumstances. There is no simmering or agitation within him. He will not invite unnecessary and useless storms or cyclones within himself. So he will not indulge in useless inquiry.

Education should have entirely different foundations, according to Lao Tzu – non-ambitions foundations, desireless. If someone can tackle mathematics, good; if he cannot, then also it is good. Try to find out what he is good in and do not hammer the fact that he is not good at mathematics. Do not destroy him, for he is sure to be good in something else.

Mulla Nasruddin was employed in a shop. But the Mulla could not help snoozing off every now and then. His master tried him on all counters; but wherever he sat, he fell asleep. The master ultimately asked him, "Mulla, now you tell me where I should place you." The Mulla said, "Master, put me in charge of your pyjama-counter and place a board beside me, 'Our pyjamas are so cosy and comfortable that even the sales-man falls asleep!' What else can I suggest?"

The problem is not of sleep but of lack of incentive to remain awake. You are not awake without a reason and it is also not without a reason that you cannot sleep in the night. So what Nasruddin is trying to say is that he has no curiosity to know who is passing on the road or who enters the shop or leaves it.

Nasruddin used to say, "A man put his hand in my pocket but I did not extend my hand towards my pocket, even to know what he was doing. I debated with myself that if there was something in my pocket, someone must have already removed it by now. It cannot remain so long with me!

Once a thief entered the Mulla's house. His wife woke him up. The Mulla said, "Let him find his own mistake. Why should I help him?"

Once again a thief entered Mulla's house. Nasruddin hid himself in the almirah. The thief searched the whole house but found nothing – not even the master of the house! The door was locked

from within. When he could not find anything he became curious about the master of the house. Ultimately he found him standing with his back towards him in the almirah. The thief was surprised. "What are you doing here?" He asked him. The Mulla said, "I was so ashamed you will find my house bare that I hid myself."

So Nasruddin says that he cannot remain awake because there is no cause no incentive, to keep him awake. Then where was the need to remain awake? Now if you cannot sleep at night it is because the reasons that keep you awake in the day time do not subside at night – and so how can you sleep? All images of the day keep returning again and again – the people you met, the conversations you had. The excitement of the day continues in the night and therefore you cannot sleep.

Hence we see why Lao Tzu talks of a non-distressed mind. He is a different man altogether – non-distressed. He hankers after nothing and is happy with what he has. Rather, he feels it is more than enough. He is grateful for what he has received: he is thankful for it. And what he has not received, is not the hankering of his mind. He does not ask, he does not desire nor expect to possess what he has not been given by nature. What he does not have, he does not have. It is not part of his mind at all!

But our minds are made differently. We are blind towards what we have and very much awake and aware of what we do not have. We forget what we have. If you stay with me for seven days and I give you plenty of attention and then if one day I look at you sharply, you will forget all that you had received the last seven days. My angry eyes will remain lifelong in your memory. If a person gives you love for years on end but forgets to give it one day, all the previous years become useless, meaningless. The love-less day becomes very precious to us. We seem to grasp only that which is not. All our attention is rooted into the lack of things.

I have two hands, too feet. My attention is never drawn towards them, I take them for granted. Now suddenly, if I were to lose one finger, my whole life becomes useless. Now my life becomes a torture I keep arguing with God for his gross injustice in depriving me of a finger. When he had given it to me, there was never the feeling of gratitude within but now when He has taken it away, I feel the injustice! And not that I had done something worthwhile with this finger – I had not painted a picture or played the veena or given a helping hand to somebody. I was in fact, totally unconscious of its existence; I had taken it so much for granted. It was only the day that I lost it that I became conscious of it.

Now the fact remains that I never did anything worthwhile with this finger, then why am I so upset, now that I have lost it? Nothing has come to an end, none of my activities have stopped but this is the way of our mind – the loss is always greater and what we have, we hardly are aware of.

Lao Tzu says, "If we create minds that are desireless, if we do not draw the attention of people towards desirous things, their hearts will be calm, unruffled."

But we attract attention.

In the olden days when a person was rich, the society requested him not to make a show of his riches. That he was rich, was enough. His display would only become the cause of torment and

distress to the hearts of others. Therefore, the proof of riches was always this, that the rich man did not display his wealth. Only the poor made a show of having and those who did possess went about as if they did not.

I have heard a Sufi story:

There was a beggar who descended from a series of emperors. It was a known fact that his forefathers were great kings and they had great treasures but since a few generations they had turned paupers. Nobody knew where or when they lost their treasures and their Kingdom and how they were reduced to this state. For generation this remained a secret.

Then in one generation, a fakir came to their house. He called the young beggar and said, "You are the one who can be told about the treasures. We are the guardians." "What guardians?" The youth asked. "We know nothing." The fakir said, "Your forefathers left their treasures in the care of our Guru's Guru and he said, when such a person is born in our house who is not eager to flout wealth, you may return the treasures to him. You are the man and I have come to give you back the treasure." The youth said, "At least give me some time to think!" The fakir said, "You are the right man we were looking for!"

If someone brought news of such treasure to you, would you sit quietly? No. You would at once jump to your feet and inquire eagerly, "Where is it? Hurry!" Here was a house-hold, living on alms and yet this man says, "Give me time to think." For this man feels it is a great responsibility. To live in poverty is not as difficult as having wealth and not making a show of it. So the youth begs for time to think over. "You have taken care of my forefathers' treasures so long. Look after them a little longer please!" He begged of him. The fakir urged him to follow him that very moment for now he said the signs were complete. "For," he said, "We have got the title-deed in which it is clearly written, "Whenever a person of our family asks for time to think over, hand over the treasure to him." He said he came in every generation but whomever he asked, he got ready to take possession at once.

The treasure was given to the youth. The news spread like wild-fire in the town but the begging continued. The king sent for the young man and said, "Are you mad or is it only a rumour, that you have received your forefathers' wealth? If you have, then why do you still beg?" The youth replied, "At first begging was a necessity, now it has become a duty. For the treasure has been given to me entirely on condition that I make no show of it. Now if I do not beg and just sit in my house, what could be a greater exhibition of wealth than that?"

When wealth becomes an exhibition, desires are born. But we earn wealth so that we can show it off. If we cannot display, where is the sense in earning it? Then where is the sense in making palaces in which we are never going to stay? And that is the use of keeping that which we cannot exhibit? This is how we think. But Lao Tzu says, "If you do not draw people's attention, they can live in supreme peace."

This exhibitionist is a diseased person, for it is healthy to enjoy what you have but very unhealthy to display it. Try and understand this a little. It is healthy to enjoy what one has in a spirit of gratefulness but to go about exhibiting it is an illness a disease. Actually, only he is eager to show off, who cannot enjoy it. He who enjoys it, has no need to display it. What you cannot enjoy, you display. What you can, you never make a show of. There is this Exhibitionism at all levels in our society.

Nowadays, scientists call only a particular type of people exhibitionists. People who exhibit their sex-organs any time, anywhere are called exhibitionists. There is a big class of people in this category and it works on principles as well as without principles. When it works on some regulations we raise no objections but when it works without any rules, we object.

The scientists were confounded what was the motive that drove a man to exhibit his nakedness in the middle of the road! What does he get out of it? After a lot of research it was discovered that only that person indulges in this kind of exhibitionism, who has had no pleasure of sex. He who has never enjoyed sex, now takes pleasure in exhibiting it. This is of course meaningless. Nothing is gained by this showing of the body by the exhibitor as well as the spectator. Nothing is achieved but something within the exhibitor must be getting satisfied.

You will be shocked to know what all devices the exhibitionists contrive at! In Athens men's clothes were so designed that their genitals were clearly visible. Not satisfied with this, they improvised leather genitals which they wore under their clothes to give the necessary effect! We are shocked to know this today. Today, women all over the world are keen on displaying their breasts but since it is well within the frame-work of our society, we do not object nor do we notice it as unnatural. Just the same was the condition in Athens 2,000 years ago.

Now these leather genitals are displayed in the museum of Athens and people are shocked to think how eccentric the Athenians must have been; for where was the need? Two thousand years hence, all the devices of showing off the breasts that exist today will be displayed in museums and the women of the future times will wonder why all this display!

What was the need?

There is no need but there is something somewhere and that is, whatever we begin to become incapable of enjoying, we begin to exhibit. Whatever we enjoy, we do not display. The man who eats well and also digests his food well, never goes about talking what is cooked in his house! He does not go about throwing parties to show people the umpteen fares he enjoys!

Nasruddin was once invited by the emperor. It was the king's rule that he invited a few special people on his birthday. Nasruddin also, was called – for the first time. There were about 500 guests. Plates were laid out and also the dishes but the dinner was not started yet. Dish upon dish of delectable fare was being laid out. The hall is filled with delicious aromas. It was said that every time the king served entirely new dishes.

Now Nasruddin began to get restless. His hunger was getting out of control. At last he shouted, "What is this happening brothers? Is the food laid out for eating or merely display?" The man next to him whispered to him, "Ssh! You are showing lack of manners. This clearly shows you come from a hungry house-hold. Let all the food be laid out. Till then talk of other things. Do not look there at all! When you eat also, see that you do not lick your plate clean. Leave something back. You seem to be a poor man who has not enough to eat." Said Nasruddin, "Is it better to show that I have food or that I have hunger?" Only he displays food who has no hunger within him.

When there is no hunger within, it becomes necessary to display food. As long as one has hunger, one eats food and does not display it. So whatever things we exhibit, are those things that we

cannot, or are unable to enjoy. This is the sign of a diseased mind. And Lao Tzu says, ”If people’s attention is not drawn towards the rare and the unattainable (and hence useless for they have no intrinsic value) then people will not be distressed but they will remain cool and calm.”

And when people are calm and cool a new dimension opens in life. Distress leads to the mundane world whereas calmness, tranquility leads towards God. Distress is a journey of sorrow, Of samsara, whereas tranquility is a journey towards freedom, liberation, Truth.

Enough for today.

CHAPTER 10

The secret of a full stomach and an empty mind – Tao

20 July 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 3: SUTRA 2

THEREFORE THE SAGE, IN EXERCISE OF HIS GOVERNMENT, EMPTIES THEIR MINDS, FILLS THEIR BELLIES, WEAKENS THEIR WILLS AND STRENGTHENS THEIR BONES.

Lao-Tze's talks seem upside down – or so it appears to us. The reason is not that they are upside down, the reason is that we are upside down.

A disciple of Lao Tzu, Chuang-Tse was on his death-bed. His friends who had gathered round him asked, "What is your last wish Chuang-Tse?" He replied, "I have only one desire. In this world I stood on my legs, in the next, I wish to stand on my head." His disciples were perplexed. They told him they could not follow what he said. "Do you wish to stand upside down in heaven?" they asked. "What you call standing correctly," he said, "I discovered to be so topsy-turvy that in my next life I want to experiment by standing on my head. Perhaps things will then be right."

Lao Tzu says, "The awakened Ones, fill the stomachs of those in their governance alright and satisfy their hunger but empty out their minds." They take care to see that all their bodily needs are satisfied but work constantly towards keeping their minds free from ambition. What we do as a rule is, that we sacrifice the body to any extent to satisfy the ambitions of the mind and gratify its desires. We are forever ready to sacrifice the body at the altar of the mind's desires.

Our whole life is one long story of the murder of the body to satisfy the desires of the mind. And this normally, we call wisdom. But Lao Tzu says, "The stomach of man should be full but his mind should be empty."

What does he mean by an empty mind? What does he mean by a full stomach? People should be healthy and strong and well-nourished but their minds should be blank and empty! And the criterion of supreme health is – a well-filled body and an empty mind.

But we are more intent on filling the mind. This is our life-long effort – to fill the mind with thoughts, desires, ambitions! Gradually, the body remains small but the mind keeps growing. The body only drags behind the mind. But Lao Tzu says, "The mind should be empty, – like an empty vessel." Now what do we mean by the vessel? Do we mean the outer walls or the empty space within the walls? Normally, we refer to the walls as the vessel. Lao Tzu says you are wrong. The walls are useless. It is the space within that comes of use – No one buys a filled vessel!

What do you mean when you refer to a house: the four walls or the space within? We, as a rule refer to the walls. When we think of building a house, we think of building walls. Lao Tzu says, "Your thinking is very inverse." The house is the empty space within the walls, for no man lives in the walls. Man lives always in the empty space within. Now if this empty space is filled up, it is difficult to live there. The body is only the wall. It should be full and strong. It is the mind within that is the mansion and that should be empty. The soul of man, the atman, his consciousness, resides in this palace. If the mind is empty, then alone can the atman stay there comfortably, for then there will be space enough for it to stay. If the mind is full it is just as, you would have a house but it is so filled with junk that you have to sleep outside, live outside; for there is no space whatsoever within.

We all are like the man who has over-filled his house, so much so that he cannot step in. He perforce has then to sleep in the verandah. Our minds are so full that there is no room for the atman, with the result that it has to wander outside. Whenever we go within, we shall find only the mind and not the atman. You will come across some thought, some desire, some condition, for that is what the mind is full of. Go within the house and there is nothing but furniture – the owner is missing.

Lao Tzu says, "Those who know say that the body should be healthy and well-nourished but the mind must be empty." The mind should be as if it did not exist. An empty mind, according to Lao Tzu, is a No-Mind – as if it is not. The supreme art of existence, unfolds itself from such an empty mind and the supreme visions of life, begin to appear therefrom.

'THEY STRENGTHEN THEIR BONES BUT WEAKEN THEIR WILL.' We always endeavour to increase our will-power. We always say, "Have you no will-power? If so, you are a spineless worm!" But Lao Tzu says, "The sage weakens the will-power." This is very strange! We always exhort our children to develop their will-power.

The wise men of today feel that man's will-power should develop still further. Nietzsche has written an uncommon book. 'THE WILL TO POWER.' He says there is only one aim in man s life – the will for power. The more will-power a man has, the greater he is supposed to be. Carlysle Emerson and all thinkers of the West, lay great stress on a strong will-power. Your will-power should be an immutable wall of stone. Let the world stagger, you should not. You may break, you may die but never bow down!

But here is Lao Tzu, who says, "Let the bones be strong but destroy the will-power – wipe it off as if it never existed!" Why? Because man has to choose from only two – Will Power or Surrender. He who strengthens his resolve, strengthens his ego. He who surrenders, his ego dissolves and

becomes extinct. He who treads the path of Resolution reaches his own self. He who treads the path of surrender reaches the Universal Self (God). If you want to reach God, you have to leave even your self. To strengthen the 'I', you will have to hold your own self very hard. Then even if your bones break or you yourself die, your resolve should never break. This is our state of affairs and we call it a very straight and logical arrangement; for we say, "What a weak man you are? Can't you fight, have you no strength?"

And here is Lao Tzu who says you should not have this strength! It is not that you break or that you stoop. Lao Tzu says, "You be so that you do not even know when you bent." Even the air should not feel that you have resisted. You bend before the breeze that blows, just as the lowly grass does. The haughty tree stands firm in the wind and does not bend. It resists the storm. And the fun is, the small weed overcomes the storm whereas the big tree loses the battle.

Lao Tzu says if you fight, you lose for you do not know with whom you are fighting. Every single individual when he fights, he fights with the infinite power. When we fight we fight with the infinite that resides all around us. Lao Tzu says, "Do not fight." Let not the question of resistance arise. Do not count yourself so apart that you believe you will have to fight. You drop yourself low. You become one with the storm, co-operate with it. Then the storm will have no knowledge of how it passed over you.

And when the storm passes away you will find that it has not touched you at all! Your strength is not a bit less for you never resisted. And there is no question of defeat for the storm belongs to Him to whom you belong.

That which came to fight, you felt he had come to fight. In fact, it had not. It was because of your will-power that you felt the storm was aggressive. You are ready to fight therefore you defined it as an enemy; or else, no definition was necessary. Try to understand this:

Is the enemy really an enemy? Or do we ourselves define one as such. And why do we define? Because we are ready to fight. If I do not wish to fight, one thing is certain – I shall call no one my enemy. If I wish to fight, I shall create my foes. All enmity is born out of will-power. All struggle is born out of will-power.

Lao Tzu says, "You be as if you are not." As the air passes the sword or the sword passes through the air. The air is not cut anywhere by the sword because it does not resist the sword. Pass a sword through water, it cuts nowhere. As the sword cuts, the water joins again. The water does not resist. You too do not resist. Lao Tzu says, "Be like the water, be like the air." Let the force that cuts asunder, pass off. If you do not resist it, you will find that no sooner it is gone, you are one again. You did not break whereas if you fight, you are bound to break.

As much importance as we give will-power, Lao Tzu's description of it, is just the opposite. We are bound to respect will-power for the frame-work of our existence is cast in the Ego and stands on ambition. We have to rush somewhere, reach somewhere attain something – wealth, fame, status, rank. We have to snatch something from someone and prevent someone from snatching something from us. Our whole life is a struggle. Our very way of looking at things is from the view-point of struggle and not of giving in. If we give in. If we bow to someone, it is a matter of great shame and disgust.

Lao Tzu says, "This way of looking at life leads to illness and disease. You be as if you are not." In this being as if you are not, the will-power will not be.

The entire art of Ju-Jitsu or Judo in Japan, stands on this sutra of Lao Tzu. It will be useful to understand this for then what Lao Tzu says will become clear. Now if I give you a blow, the natural reaction is, that you will oppose it. You can oppose in two ways: either you will obstruct my attack or you will box me in return. If you cannot do either, yet your body will try to resist. The muscles become taut and they will prevent the impact from penetrating into you. Your body will become tense and hard; it will become like a wall and try to prevent the blow from going in.

The art of Judo is exactly opposite of this; there is no art of war greater than Judo. A person who knows even a little bit of this art can defeat a champion in no time; and this he can do by merely not fighting. The art of Judo says, "Whenever anyone boxes you, you take it all in. You co-operate with it. Do not fight with it." You become at that time as if you are a pillow. Understand the difference between resistance to the blow and taking in the blow. You have received a blow. "Co-operate with it and take it in. Do not fight with it at any level." Then, Judo says, "The hand of the aggressor breaks!" For the enemy puts in all his strength and will-power in the blow but you give him full freedom. Then his state will be like, when say, you and I are pulling at a string. Then suddenly I leave my end of it. What will happen? You will fall!

The art of Judo says, 'Do not fight.' When anyone hits you, you co-operate with him, do not make him your enemy. You treat him as a part of your own body. Then the aggressor is tired out in no time. He will be tormented for he has lost his energy with each blow he has dealt. Your energy is intact. Not only this, but according to the science of Judo, the energy emitting from your enemy, will enter you and you will feel more powerful.

A person well-versed in Judo can defeat any kind of man within five minutes. The enemy is not to be vanquished, he gets defeated himself.

There is a very famous story about Judo: There was a famous swordsman. There was no one equal to him in all Japan. One night, he was returning home at about 2 A.M. As he entered his room, he saw a rat come out of his hole, and sit on his bed. He was very angry. He tried to frighten him away but the rat did not move. The swordsman was puzzled. He could frighten away the strongest of men and this rat – ? He was now very angry. He picked up a toy-sword with which his daughter used to play and hit the rat hard. The rat moved barely an inch. But he had dealt the blow in such anger that the sword fell down and broke into pieces. The rat sat silent in his place. Now the . man was disturbed and a little frightened himself. The rat did not seem to be an ordinary rat. He had never missed a blow – he could not imagine how he missed this?

He went and fetched his own sword. Now if a person brings a real sword to kill a rat, his defeat is certain. A warrior bringing a sword to kill a rat! He is now afraid of the rat. It seems an uncommon rodent! His hands began to tremble. Now he feared if the real sword broke there would be no way of redressing the insult and infamy. So he hit very cautiously. It is a known fact that a blow dealt cautiously, always misses the target. The very fact that you are cautious, shows that there is fear within. If there is no fear within, a man is never cautious. He acts and the work is done. He had wielded a sword many times in his life but today as he brought it down on the rat, his hand trembled. The sword fell from his hand and broke into pieces. The rat moved just a little bit. The man was confounded – he lost his senses.

The story goes on, that he made it known in the town that if anyone had a clever cat, he should bring it to him. The wealthiest man of the town brought his cat the next day. She was an expert rat-killer. But the swordsman was frightened and so was the owner of the cat when he heard the full story. If the greatest swordsman broke his sword over him, and he was not stirred, what chance did the cat have? The cat also got wind of it. She too was frightened. All night she lay awake making various plans to kill the rat. At times she wondered why all this preparations. Rats run away at sight of her! But then she said to herself, "This rat is uncommon. I might as well be prepared." The next morning she came and stood at the entrance of the room. She looked in and saw the rat. She trembled at the sight – there was the rat still and silent and the swordsman's sword lying in pieces! Now to her consternation, instead of she advancing, the rat advanced. She could never have anticipated such a move – and that too from a rat! She quickly ran out!

Now the swordsman was really frightened. He sent a request to the king to send the palace-cat. Now this cat was the best cat in town. Before leaving the palace she told the king, "Are you not ashamed to send me to kill an ordinary mouse? I am not an ordinary cat!" The fact is, she too had heard that the rat was no ordinary rat so in the order to dissuade the king from sending her, she was trying this trick. The king said, "It is no ordinary rat and it is I who am afraid whether you will return alive." The cat was taken to the swordsman's house. She pounced on the rat with all her might; but she missed the rat and her head struck against the wall. She went back to the palace with blood streaming down her head. The rat sat still where he was.

Now in that town there was a fakir. He had a cat that was the master of all cats. The palace-cat recommended that this master-cat's services should be employed. Perhaps she would have a method of tackling this rat. The master-cat was called. All the cats of the town gathered to see what would happen. It was going to be a decisive game. If the cat lost, the cats will forever lose against rats.

Now the rat was where he was. The fakir's cat entered the room. All the other cats began to advise her what she should do. The fakir's cat shouted at them and said, "You foolish things – making plans to kill a rat! The very fact that you plan, shows that you are frightened. After all, he is merely a rat – I'll catch him! There is no need for any method. To be a cat is the very art of catching a rat." The swordsman also warned her that it was no ordinary rat. He said if she failed, he would have to leave his house forever. The cat said, "What is so great about this rat? Please keep your calm!"

The cat went in, caught the mouse and brought it out!

All the cats gathered round her to know how she had done it? The cat replied, "The fact that I am a cat, was enough. I am a cat and he is a rat and the rat always co-operates with the cat for the cats have always caught them. This is our nature – I am a cat and he is a rat. I will catch and he will be caught. You all made plans and hence you lost for you brought your intellect in-between."

Since hundreds of years the Zen fakirs have been telling this story. This cat belonged to a poor fakir. She was not even as strong and healthy as the palace-cat but she was aware of her nature and that of the rat's. Nothing untoward had taken place.

Those who teach Judo say, that nature has a rule and a disposition of her own. If a blow is directed towards you and you resist it, then both the energies fight and both the energies are destroyed. If

you do not resist, then the energy flows from one only and the other becomes a hollow; and in him the energy from the other is absorbed. The aggressor is distressed. He has planned his attack. You do not plan and also you take in the attack. If such an emptiness is created within that there is no resistance to any attack because there is no will-power within to resist, then this emptiness unfolds an energy which has no equal in this world.

Lao Tzu says ”Be devoid of resolutions.” This means be resolve-less, be empty within. Do not try to be something. That cat says to her friends, ”You are cats and you are trying to be a cat? Have you got to toil to be a cat? You are cats – that is enough. All your efforts put you into trouble.”

The Judo-teacher teaches his pupils not to attack but to await an attack. And when the attack comes remember only one thing – to absorb the attack! If someone abuses you and you take in his abuse, the aggressor becomes weak. Try this out if you may! He who drinks in the abuse – not suppresses it – as if it is a loving gift; he who absorbs it within his whole being, becomes a pool. And this pool is filled with the energy that flows out of him who abuses, and he becomes that much stronger.

Also, when the vilifier finds that no abuse is forth coming from the other, he becomes very uneasy. If you were to return his abuse with abuse, he is not uneasy for that is what he expected in return. Then he extends his vituperations with added vigour in order to incite you.

But if you are well-versed in the art of taking-in, you will keep taking in his abuses and weakening him till ultimately he falls himself.

Judo says, ’the enemy falls by his own weakness’. There is no need to throw him down.

Judo was developed from this very sutra of Lao Tzu. And with the sutras of Lao Tzu and thoughts of Buddha, Zen was born. The concepts of Buddha reached China from India. At that time Lao Tzu’s thoughts were prevailing in the atmosphere of China and the confluence of these two produced an absolutely new religion – the Zen religion. Buddha had also said on a different level and in different words, that he was defeated by the foes within him, with whom he fought for a long time. He could not overcome them. And then when he gave up all fight, he realised he had never lost! When these thoughts of Buddha coincided with the sutras of Lao Tzu a completely new science came into being – the science of winning without fighting. That science is: Fight not and win. Victory without struggle. Success without will-power!

We cannot imagine this for we have always believed that where there is competition and rivalry, there is victory; and where there is war, there are garlands of triumph. So Lao Tzu will appear contrary to us for he says ”THE BONES SHOULD BE STRONG BUT THE WILL-POWER ABSENT.” Why does he differentiate between bones and will-power? If I were to attack you, your bones should be so strong as to absorb the onslaught. By bones is meant the structure that absorbs the blow. This should be strong enough to bear any excesses committed on the body by another. At the same time, there should be no ego within to resist and fight back.

Remember, to fight we do not require as strong a body as we do to resist. A weak person can also fight. And if the body is weak and the mind insane the person can fight very well. A weak constitution is no hindrance to fight and the truth is, it is always the weak who spoil for a fight.

I have been told that when the first American stepped out of the port of Hong Kong, he saw two Chinese fighting. These Chinese were connected to the order of Lao Tzu. For ten minutes he stood looking at them. Both men brought their faces close to each other, brought their clenched fists right up to each other's nose, hurled abuses and made a lot of noise then they withdrew. But there was no fight. After watching them for ten minutes he asked his guide, "What is happening?"

The guide said, "This is fighting – Chinese style." "But there is no fight!" Said the American. "I am watching for the last ten minutes. The men come close to hitting each other, then why do they fall back?" The guide replied, "For the last 2,000 years, it is the belief of this country that he who attacks first, loses. So both are waiting for each other to begin, for he who begins will have lost control over himself first. And as soon as one of them strikes, the crowd will disperse for they know the winner. Now each is trying to instigate the other. Let us see who loses." A very strange sutra indeed – He who attacks, loses the fight.

This is Lao Tzu's trend of thought – the weak attacks first.

I mentioned Machiavelli yesterday. The philosophy of Lao Tzu and Machiavelli are parallel. Machiavelli says, "The best remedy for protection is to attack first." The best form of defence is to attack first. And Machiavelli is right for the weak should have one over his adversary then only are there chances for him to win. This message is for the weak. In fact, only the weak think in terms of defense. Lao Tzu says, "When the attack comes, drink it in!" The question of attack does not arise – either first or last. Take it within yourself. "If the body is healthy, the mind is void and the bones strong – the walls should be strong and the owner with in as if he is not. Then," Lao Tzu says, "the Perfect Man is born."

This concept is just the reverse of our way of thinking; and it is because all our standards of judgments our very way of thinking is opposed to Lao Tzu. We would say, it is a sign of weakness, of cowardice, not to resist an attack. Life challenges at every step and you stand where you are! The storm summons and you lie flat on the ground; or the river carries you along and you get carried away, you do not swim!

Nasruddin's neighbours came running to him one day. "Hurry Mulla, your wife has fallen in the river! The current is strong and the river is full with the rain's waters. Hurry or she might reach the Ocean!" Nasruddin ran. There was a great crowd on the river bank. He jumped into the river and began swimming against the current. The current was so strong he could make no headway. People shouted at him that he was going in the wrong direction. They said, "Mulla you are foolish. When a person falls in the river he does not float against the current! Your wife has gone down the river."

The Mulla replied, "Forgive me, I know my wife better than you. She always did the opposite thing. I know her for the last 30 years. She could not be down the river if you say all who fall in the river go down-stream. She must have gone upstream!"

There are just such inverse stops between Lao Tzu and us. Therefore it is difficult to understand him. His science of logic is completely inverse to our reasoning. What we look upon as cowardice, Lao Tzu calls strength. He says, "The greater the ability you have to fight, the lesser will be the eagerness to fight. And if a man's strength and power is complete, there shall be no fight at all!"

Take it this way: We stand before the gates of the Almighty and hurl abuses at Him. There is no response. The atheists are vilifying God since thousands of years, yet not once has it happened that God has made known His Presence. Does He not feel it is cowardice not to prove Himself? But He is silent. And Lao Tzu says "He is silent because He is the Supreme Power." There is no resistance there. If the Atheist acclaims "There is no God," an echo comes back, "There is no God!" He co-operates with the non-believer also – there is no opposition. The bigger the power, the lesser is the resistance.

A priest was taking a class of Bible in a school. He asked the boys if they had understood all that he had told them about forgiveness, the day before. "If someone gives you a slap, will you forgive him?" He asked one boy. The boy replied, "I may be able to if he is older than me. But it would be difficult to forgive him if he is younger than me."

This is exactly the state of our mind. We subjugate those we can suppress, we trouble those whom we can trouble, we hurt those whom we can safely hurt and when we cannot, we resort to Scriptures to explain it away.

Lao Tzu says, "Let not that centre remain within you that thinks in terms of big and small, high and low; that thinks and plans how to behave with whom, that plans every situation. In other words, let there be no resolve."

Lao Tzu does not respond even if a small child slaps him. He also does not respond if the King attacks him! If you understand this sutra well, it becomes a great sutra for sadhana.

Try out an experiment of non-resistance – just for a week. Resolve not to resist, whatever happens. Whatever you had resisted before, you shall not resist for the next seven days. All the things you repressed so far, you shall not for the next seven days. Within this short span you will find that you have collected so much energy. you cannot imagine. Then you will find it very difficult to waste this energy. We have no idea how we dissipate our energies! I am walking along the road. A small child laughs at me; at once the resistance begins!

Once Lao Tzu was attacked by someone in his village. Lao Tzu did not even look back to see who the miscreant was. The villain came back running to him and said, "Please look back at least or my effort will go in vain!" Lao Tzu replied, "Sometimes by mistake our own nail hurts us. Then what do we do? Or at times we fall down and break our limbs – and it is all our own fault! What do we do then!"

Lao Tzu said, "Once I was sitting in a boat. An empty boat came and bumped against my boat. Then what could I do? Had there been a boat-man in the boat. there would have been trouble. Since that day I decided that if I did not do anything when the boat was empty, what difference does it make if the boat-man was there? You have done your job. Now go your way. Let me attend to my work." The man came again the next day and said, "I could not sleep the whole night! What sort of a man are you? Please do something, say something so that I can be free of anxiety!"

It is but natural that he was troubled within. We all live in hope and expectations. If I abuse someone, I am confident the abuse will be thrown back. If it is thrown back, I feel everything is moving according to rule. If it does not come back, we feel restless. If I love someone, I take it for granted my love will be returned. If it is not, I am disturbed. We decide the give and take coins for everything.

Lao Tzu says, "Change these coins. Become naught within, remove the will-power and let whatever happens, happen." We will then say, "We might contract some illness, we might die, we might be looted, we shall be ruined!" We find a thousand excuses. But our arguments will hold no water for from all the things that we are trying to save, nothing remains. Everything is lost. Neither can we hold back death nor illness nor anything. Everything is destroyed. And in our endeavour to save these things, we do not even attain any of them. If there was something to be attained, it would not be destroyed.

Try out the above mentioned experiment for seven days. For me the meaning of sannyas is what Lao Tzu says. He says, "A sannyasin is one who gives up all resolve and accepts surrender; he gives up all fight with the world and becomes co-operative. He declares he has enmity towards none; wherever the winds take him, he goes. He does not insist on anything. He accepts whatever happens. There is no goal that he wants to reach. Wherever he reaches, that is his destination. Such a person is a sannyasin. Such a sannyas-attitude opens the doors to the supreme treasures of the world."

Lao Tzu says, "THE SAGES IN THEIR GOVERNMENT..." This word needs pondering over for sages have no government. At least, we have never heard of it! But this is a very ancient truth. There was a time when the sage ruled. He had no government he had no structure of a government but the rule was his.

In the Jain order they say "Mahavira's rule". He who governs is called a King, a preceptor. Therefore we call Mahavira and Buddha, preceptors. And whatever the Shastas (preceptors) said was compiled in books that came to be known as shastras (Scriptures), shasan (Government) means that which given such rules, by the observance of which, a man reaches his destination.

So Lao Tzu says, "That saints in their rules and in their declarations create such scriptures by which they try to empty the mind of man and fill his belly. They break their will-power and strengthen their bones." All the method of Hatha-Yoga is towards strengthening the body. It is aimed at removing the will-power, and bringing in surrender. If this comes within one s understanding, this is an entirely new form of personality. Then we are not as we are now. This is a different way of looking at things – a different gestalt.

Things then begin to appear as soon as we begin to see. It you have decided to be alert and be prepared for an attack all the time, you will surely find a foe every day. The universe is very big and satisfies everyone's needs. If you are out to find an enemy, you will find one every moment and this is somewhat the same as when you hurt your foot, the whole day it seems you are receiving hurts at that very place only! Sometimes you wonder also – why? Why does the same place keep on getting hurt again and again and no other part of the body? The fact is, the foot is hurt every day at that particular place but you do not feel it; today there is a wound there and so you feel it. Today that part of you is sensitive, so you feel it. The other parts of the body do not feel for they are not sensitive.

We sense only those things that we become sensitive to. If we are sensitive towards aggression, if we feel the whole life to be a struggle, a war, then we shall find such people who can be enemies and we shall find such conditions which can lead to strife.

Lao Tzu gives us the other gestalt, the other sensitivity, the other way of looking at things. He says, "Seek co-operation." And he who sets out with this feeling, will begin to find friends wherever he

goes; for now his sensitivity is different. Whatever we seek, we find, or we can say, "Whatever we get is of our own seeking." We never get what we have not searched for in this world. So remember whenever you get something, it is a result of your own seeking. But we do not think this way. If we meet an enemy, we say, "How could I have sought him? He is an enemy that I have encountered." No. You are ready to meet an enemy, you are sensitive towards him. You were looking for him.

What is this state of co-operation? What is conflict and co-operation?

Kropotkin has written a book and Kropotkin is an unique personality of this Age. This age is an Age of conflict. Our whole era is one of conflict where all thoughts, right from Marx to Mao, are filled with conflicts and quarrels. In such an Age, there is one exceptional person – Kropotkin; and he is a Russian. He says, "Co-operation not conflict!" This is a very precious slogan he has proposed, though no one heeds him for the sensitivity of this Age, is not in this direction.

Darwin tried to prove that to live there is struggle for survival and he also proved the survival of the fittest. The fittest according to him is the one who is an expert in the art of war.

Within 300 years of Darwin, the theory of struggle became fully developed and this thought – stream made us more and more eager for conflict. This concept we have now fully accepted – that life is a struggle. Everyone is fighting: the father with the son, the son with the father, the husband with the wife and the wife with the husband. Everybody is fighting. It is not only a war of classes, our whole life has assumed the form of conflict, which has gradually penetrated into all levels of existence.

And each man is alone, fighting the rest of the world!

Kropotkin says, "Not conflict but co-operation should be the basis." The most interesting thing he says is, "Even for conflict, co-operation is necessary." Your enemy must co-operate with you in order to fight. If he refuses to co-operate, there is no way to fight! "So," Kropotkin says, "even for conflict, co-operation is necessary but at the same time, conflict is not necessary for co-operation, co-operation is foundational for even conflict cannot be without it."

If I wish to fight you, your co-operation is absolutely necessary in one form or the other. If you do not co-operate at all, then the fight is impossible. Fighting is also a big game of co-operation. When two men fight, they co-operate with each other in many ways. But for co-operation, conflict is not required. This means that co-operation is more deep within.

Kropotkin says, "Darwin went to the jungle and saw that the lion kills another animal knowingly. Now if the lion attacks one animal in 24 hours, he co-operates with the other animals for the remaining 23 hours! This Darwin did not notice. The animals of the forest, do not fight all the twenty-four hours. The truth is, there is no animal that fights more than man."

There was a Sufi fakir, Jalaluddin. He was sitting, lost in meditation. One of his disciples came running to him and said, "Please get up quick, a monkey has got hold of a sword! Some calamity is bound to take place." Jalaluddin said, "The sword has not fallen in the hands of a man, has it? Then there is no fear. Do not be so upset."

There is not so much conflict or struggle in the jungles a, we imagine. This is just our concept of the jungle. This is not true. There is a lot of co-operation there. But man's jungle, which he calls, culture,

society, is absolutely a den of conflict. This is not apparent: but all the while this web of enmity is spreading all over.

Kropotkin says what Lao Tzu has said on an altogether different and deeper level. Lao Tzu says, "Co-operation," but only that person can co-operate whose will-power is extinct. Conflict is possible by only those whose will-power is strong within. The greater the resolve the greater the conflict. Resolve is the sutra of conflict. If the will-power fades. conflict will disappear, for then the fighting element will be no more. Practise this and see.

All Lao Tzu's sayings are worth experimenting upon. If you experiment on it, your understanding of it will be deeper. By merely hearing me, it will not come that clearly to you. You may hear me and feel you understand. Yet you will not have understood, for this understanding will be like the flash of lightning in the dark – one moment everything is bright, then all is darkness. This is because your own logic, your own reasoning is with you since many births, and this is comprised of conflict, of struggle. In such a long train of logic, if the lightning flashes for a moment with the talk of someone on co-operation, how long can it last? As long as you have not experimented co-operation and felt the difference as against your experience of strife, this flash will not last. Carry out this experiment – just for seven days.

To understand this sutra, make a vow for seven days that from tomorrow for seven days you will practise co-operation, happen what may. Wherever the condition of conflict arises. I shall co-operate. Then this sutra will give up its secret. The secret of all these sutras open not by elucidation but by experimentation. If by explanation it becomes clear that it is worth experimenting upon, then it is enough. Co-operate with the person you fought with. Bow down in the circumstances in which you stood stiff and haughty, flow in them, lie low – absolutely flat. Then see whether in seven days, you are destroyed or reborn. See whether in seven days you have become weaker or stronger; whether you are lost or saved; whether you are ill or healthy. Then a new quality of health will begin to come within your experience.

Enough for today.

CHAPTER 11

Empty (theoretical) knowledge leads to desire

21 July 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 3: SUTRA 3

HE CONSTANTLY TRIES TO KEEP THEM WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE AND WITHOUT DESIRE; AND WHERE THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE KNOWLEDGE TO KEEP THEM FROM PRESUMING TO ACT (ON IT). WHEN THERE IS THIS ABSTINENCE FROM ACTION GOOD ORDER IS UNIVERSAL.

Those who know, always endeavour to rid people of empty knowledge.

Ordinarily we think that ignorance of knowledge is bad and know edge in itself is good, propitious. Lao Tzu however does not think this way, nor do the Rishis of the Upanishads or any person on this earth, who has attained the supreme knowledge.

There is a sutra in the Upanishads which says: ”The ignorant are led astray in the darkness but the wise ones ramble in deeper darkness.” Just to know, is more dangerous than not knowing at all. The ignorant man is humble for he knows nothing. He who does not know has no basis to create his Ego on. He is also not under the delusion that he knows. So he does not have the vantage of strengthening his ego. It is necessary to understand that nothing strengthens the ego as much as knowledge – neither wealth nor status. The very thought that ”I know”, fills a man with ego as nothing else does. Therefore it is difficult to find a more egoistic person than a pundit.

Therefore, it has happened many times that he who is filled with the arrogance of learning is willing to beg, he is willing to go hungry or naked, he aspires to no palaces or thrones; if he is revered he

is willing to give up everything else. It is easy to renounce wealth, it is easy to renounce status but it is very difficult to renounce knowledge. We can even renounce our family, our dear ones but that which we have known, we cannot part with for that is our very life-breath. If our knowledge is taken away from us, we become empty, bare. It is all our treasure. That is our mind – an accumulation of all that we know. If we do not know anything or if what we know is wiped out, we become empty, blank, void!

I was just going through a Sufi book. It has been published for the first time, though the book is a thousand years old. Many a time it was decided that this book should be published but no publisher was ready to do so; and the reason was, that there was nothing written in that book! It is a book of 200 pages aH blank! The story of this book however, is very long, this book was passed on from generation to generation of the Sufis. The history of all those who possessed the book together with their comments after reading it, has also been written. When one guru passed the book on to his successor, his comments were noted down. These have been compiled and now this book has been published.

The publisher refused to publish mere blank 200 pages! He insisted that at least the comments on tb book by various people should be printed in the front pages, So nine pages of printed matter precede the rest of the 200 pages, and these pages have nothing to do with the main book!

The person who brought this book into being, said to his disciple as he handed him the book, ”Read this book well for I have written all that is worth knowing, in it.” The disciple opened the book and found the pages blank. ”But there is nothing in it!” He exclaimed to the Guru. The guru replied, ”That means, there is nothing worth knowing. I have included in it, all that is worth knowing and the day you are capable of reading this book, you shall be freed from all books.

Therefore this book is called, ”THE BOOK OF BOOKS.” When the second disciple was handed the book, he did not even open it! The Guru urged him to open it and read but he replied, ”Nothing is ever attained by mere reading, that I know. This book also will reveal nothing.” The Guru said, ”That is why I handed this book over to you, for this book is of no use to those who read.”

The story goes on that this second receiver of the book, did not open the book ever in his whole life! This is a very difficult thing to do. When he was on his death-bed, he called the disciple he thought fit and handing him the book said, ”Remember, I never read this book. My Guru gave it to me for he knew I was not interested in reading but in knowing. Therefore, I too hand this book over to you hoping that you too will endeavour to know and not to read.”

The knowledge obtained by reading merely appears as knowledge. It is a deception. It is pseudo-knowledge.

Now this is interesting: People like Lao Tzu who know prevent others from knowing, for they know the easiest path of going astray is gathering information.

It is only in our country that this happening has taken place. Nowhere else in the world is so much known about Truth (Reality) as in our country and nowhere else do people live more in Un-reality as in our country. Nowhere is the information about religion available in such a vast measure. It can be said that all the knowledge of the world put together, is nothing compared to ours. Yet the ease

with which we live in ir-religion, is not seen anywhere else. What is the reason? Where have we erred? We should be the most religious people in the world! Rays of Truth should emanate from our very existence and we should be seeing God everywhere. This is not so. We talk a great deal about – God but we are not even remotely acquainted with Him. This is the mistake that Lao Tzu has described: "Knowledge prevents from knowing."

Lao Tzu's disciple Chuang-Tse has said, "If you want to know, beware of knowledge." This statement seems contradictory. Why should one beware of knowing if one wants to know? It should be so if one did not want to know. The reason is, that one who has gained knowledge is deprived of it. Why?

It is because, all information is borrowed. Some Ramakrishna or Ramana says "God is". We hear and believe and we repeat the same. This is information. We have not known. Someone else has known, not we and so it is borrowed. Remember, knowledge cannot be borrowed.

In this world, everything can be borrowed except one, and that is knowledge. All else in this world can be attained from the other except knowledge. This is the difference between knowledge and information. To know comes from one's own self whereas information comes from others. We hear Kabira, Nanak and whatever we hear, becomes information and this gives the illusion of knowledge. If we keep on repeating what we have heard we in course of this time, forget that this is what we have not known. We then come to feel that we know.

I have heard that there was a court-case against Nasruddin. It was a case of theft. The judge was very strict and with great difficulty Nasruddin's lawyer was able to save him. As they were coming out of the court, his lawyer asked him: "Tell me truly Nasruddin, did you steal or no?" Nasruddin said, "Hearing you over months, I was beginning to be convinced myself that I had committed the theft. So now I also doubt very much whether I did steal or no."

A thing heard repeatedly over a period of time causes difficulty – more so when you repeat it yourself. From childhood you begin repeating "God is, God is". It penetrates your very bones, mixes with your blood and echoes through every pore of the body. Long before your intelligence developed, you have known that God is. This repetition becomes so pronounced that you cannot remember a single moment when you could have questioned whether God is! It seems I always knew that God is. Now this information is suicidal.

When we already know that God is, why should we set out in search of Him? Why should I endeavour for that which I already know? This is why our whole country has turned non-spiritual while talking about spiritual knowledge all the time. If this country is to be made spiritual again, we shall have to rid ourselves of all the religious scriptures. Once we are freed from our knowledge, we can start afresh on our search.

Lao Tzu says, "Those who know, save others from knowledge." One reason for this is because knowledge is always borrowed. Lao Tzu is not referring here to the knowledge that springs from within.

If you understand this clearly, you will find there is a great difference between the two. That which is born within, that which is one's own, that is less of knowledge and more of knowing. In fact, the knowledge that manifests within, does not get collected like knowledge but develops as the ability to

know. That which is attained from without accumulation and forms a collection within. You are apart and your pile of knowledge is apart. Now this heap of knowledge is entirely outside of you. It does not even touch you. You stand apart.

For example: Supposing you are standing in your room. Now if we were to fill this room completely with coins, so much so that you are lost within it, yet you will not become a part of this wealth. You are still apart from it and with one stroke you can step out of it. Even when you are not out of it, you are outside of it. One type of knowledge gathers round us just in this way – it comes from without and accumulates round and round us but never goes within.

Whatever comes from without gathers like dust around us or like clothes; and what is born within us never accumulates but develops as our consciousness. It is more knowing and less knowledge. It becomes your consciousness. It is not that you know more but that you have the ability to know more. Nanak and Buddha, Kabir and Lao Tzu were not people who knew more. Any one of you could beat them in examinations, for their information is less. But their ability to know is so great that if you and he set out to know about a particular thing, you will never know as much as he comes to know. If even a stone is placed before him, he will know God through the stone whereas you will not be able to know even the stone in its entirety. It is possible you know more about the stone but you will have no deeper knowledge of it. Information is superficial whereas knowledge is deep-rooted.

Remember, if there is knowledge all a round you, you will remain acquainted with things. Bertrand Russell has differentiated knowledge into two parts in much the same way. One he calls acquaintance and the other he calls knowledge.

That which is mere acquaintance gathers around us and that which is knowledge does not gather around us but it transforms us. There is no difference between knowledge and the knower, whereas there is a definite distance between acquaintance and the acquainted.

Lao Tzu says, ”One who knows will save others from knowing.” They will save them from knowledge so that some day they too may enter the world where the happening of ’knowing’ takes place. It is therefore, that all sages have laid more stress on meditation and not on knowledge. Meditation increases the ability to know whereas acquaintance increases information. Please understand this difference between acquaintance and knowledge.

Mahavira has said ”The day the Supreme Knowledge dawns, there is neither the knower, nor the known, nor the information of both.” There is pure knowledge alone that remains – the ’knowing’. Neither the knower remains behind nor is there anything further to know – only pure reason remains. It is just like a mirror without any reflection for there is nothing in front of it. The mirror is there but then it is just a mirror. It would be better to say there is only ’mirroring’ for no reflection is there but still the mirror is.

Mahavira says, ”When actually the manifestation of intrinsic knowledge takes place in its fullness, the person becomes just a power capable of knowing.” The acquaintance does not remain; and remember where information finishes, the one who was informed finishes also. So it is well to take the rest of Lao Tzu’s sutra into consideration: that the acquaintance strengthens the knower whereas knowledge destroys the knower. This is the difference between the two. The more you gather knowledge, the more will your Ego be crystallized. Then the way you walk, the way you talk

will betray the fact that there is a certain point within you where the Ego who says 'I know', is forever present.

Now just the opposite happens when knowledge dawns on a person. When the manifestation takes place within and the power to know is born, a very interesting thing happens. The Ego (1) begins to get dimmer and dimmer till it ultimately fades. When it fades completely, that happening takes place which Mahavira calls 'Pure knowledge'.

This is the only difference between a sage and a learned man.

Confucius went to Lao Tzu and asked him for a message by which he could settle his life. Lao Tzu said, "He who tries to settle his life with the knowledge of others, goes astray. I shall not be the one to lead you off the right path." Now Confucius was a genius among geniuses and he was one of those who knew a great deal. He said, "I have come a long way. Please give me some knowledge." Lao Tzu replied, "We over here indulge in snatching away all knowledge, we do not commit the crime of giving it. This seems difficult to us."

Verily, in spiritual life, the Guru does the work of snatching all knowledge. He sweeps away all your information. He first makes you ignorant so that you can be lead towards knowledge. He first relieves you of all your information and places you exactly where your sheer ignorance stands. Do we really know? Let us ask ourselves honestly – do we really know God? But we keep repeating we do! Not only that, we fight over it, argue over it, wage wars to prove whether He is or He is not. Do we really know whether the soul exists? Yet we discuss the atman all day.

Not only the ordinary man, even the politician, says it is his atman that speaks! He says he hears the inner-voice. There are meaningless words. Have you ever felt the atman within your chest? Have you felt it or come in contact with it? Not a ray of the atman has ever reached you, yet you talk continuously about it. So the Guru will wipe away, hack away all this acquired knowledge from each and every place and make you stand exactly where you are. The journey only can begin from where you are and not from where you think you are.

If I have to set out for a place and I am sitting in this room. I shall have to start from this very room. But if I keep thinking I am sitting in the skies, I may keep thinking but the journey will never start from there. The first step of the journey is to be taken from where I actually am and not from where I think I am. If I insist on starting from where I think I am, I shall make no beginning at all!

Therefore it is said that first the Guru snatches away the knowledge and makes the disciple ignorant. This is a very great happening – where a man reaches a place from where he can say in all honesty that he is ignorant, that he does not know, that he knows nothing whatsoever! If a person in all truthfulness, exposes this truth before himself, he stands on the first step of the Temple of Knowledge.

Therefore Lao Tzu says that the sage who knows gives no knowledge to people; rather, he snatches away all that they know. Therefore, the real Guru does not appear likeable. You approach a Guru also with a view to get something; whereas the real Guru snatches whatsoever you possess! You go to hear him so that you can go back with material for discussion. You will bring back some information only to derive the pleasure of being a Guru to others. You can stand with pride before

others and flout your knowledge before those who do not know. That is why a real Guru seems unpalatable for he is out to cut you from every side. He shakes the very roots of what you know. Therefore, we are very much afraid to go before a real Guru for you know he will strip you naked. He will remove your garments one by one and throw it away and make you stand where you are.

It is very painful to stand where you are. The Guru knows this and also that it is distasteful and disgusting to know that you know nothing. But he also knows that without experiencing and knowing this, no steps can be taken in the direction of the world of knowledge. Hence what Lao Tzu says is correct. Lao Tzu's book did not circulate well enough and his words did not spread wide. Why? Because who is willing to be ignorant? We are all prepared to be learned. Our schools and universities, our priests and purohits, our mahatmas and sadhus are all distributing knowledge. And the fun of the thing is, the more this knowledge spreads, the more ignorance increases. There is definitely something wrong behind this knowledge. And because of this knowledge, Lao Tzu is very difficult to follow.

Together with this, the sage endeavours to free him from empty knowledge and desires. We hear our Sadhus and Saints talking of freedom from desires. So this does not seem anything new. But even in these words of Lao Tzu, there is something new. Lao Tzu says, "desires not of the mundane world alone"; the desire for beatitude is also a desire.

Therefore the sage tries to make people desireless. The common-place Sadhu would say, "The wise strive to free men of worldly desires." They make it a point to add the adjective worldly. This means there are unworldly desires also. Verily if beatitude is to be attained, God is to be realised and freedom from birth and death is desired, then these are non-worldly desires.

If you are to understand Lao Tzu, you will have to understand this that Lao Tzu says, "All desires are worldly." There are no worldly desires as such. To be desiring is to be in the mundane world. There are no desires through which a man can be liberated. Therefore Lao Tzu says, "Desire is bondage." The quality of the desire makes no difference.

When you desire wealth, what happens within you? Let us investigate the mechanism of this happening. The desire is here and now but the wealth is not here and now. It will be sometime in future. It can be tomorrow, the day after in a future date. I am here and now and the wealth is in distant future. Now this my being here and now, will be stretched and pulled because of my desire for that which can be in the future. The farther the cherished goal. the greater will be the tension. If the wealth is attained after one year, the tension will remain for one year. My mind will have to spread out in this period of one year and keep touching and grasping this wealth in dreams.

This is the meaning of desire.

Beatitude is yet further away. So is God. If I want to attain God, one birth does not seem to be enough. I shall have to wait for many births and then I shall have to spread mv hand of desire right into these births if I wish to attain God. I shall stretch and strain myself for the purpose. Desire means the process of tension.

Lao Tzu says in this invaluable sutra. "The sage frees people of desires." It means, the sage relieves them from their tensions. The wise man says, "Live in the present, here and now." Forget tomorrow.

Forget the wealth of tomorrow, the religion of tomorrow, the Paramatman of tomorrow for if you have anything in the morrow, desire remains. Then you will be tense and if you are tense and the desire remains, you will be in bondage – restless troubled, distressed. Lao Tzu says, "Forget the very desire to desire." He does not qualify the desires. If you read the ordinary scriptures you will find desires qualified into good and bad. You are exhorted to leave the bad and fill yourself with the good. You are told to leave worldly desires and invite the desires for the other world; leave all desires to attain in this world – nothing can be attained here. If anything is worth desiring, it is in the other world.

All these people dole out such talks and give very interesting arguments in their favour. They say, "whatever you get here in this world is momentary, and what we are offering you is eternal." This is an interesting temptation. This is to excite greed. They say that you are fools to run after wealth, we are wise for we run after religion. And if you attain wealth you will lose it also, whereas, no one can snatch our religion from us.

The difference between these two types of Sadhus, is the difference of cunning, the difference of desire of the lesser Sadhu. This man who talks of the desires of the other world, is more cunning, more calculating. He says, "What will you do with the women of this world? Their beauty is today but it will not be tomorrow. Attain the APSARAS (celestial women) whose beauty is everlasting. The happiness of this world is very momentary – like a bubble on water. The moment you touch it, it is no more. We show you a way to eternal happiness."

This man who speaks is ridden with desire, and he who follows him will also follows him for desire.

Lao Tzu says, "Unconditional freedom from desire." It is not a question of which desire but freedom from desire itself. No demands for tomorrow but life for today. Tomorrow is unreliable, Life is today. No dreams spread out in the future but one should be present in this very moment. To be desireless, is to be present in the present. To be desireless, this moment is enough. I shall not step out of this moment. I shall live with what is. If there is happiness, I shall live with happiness, if there is pain, I shall live with pain. If there is darkness or light, day or night, I shall stay with whatever is – this moment. I shall not lose myself in dreams beyond this moment. This means, to live with Reality, to live with the Truth, to live in the Fact that is.

Lao Tzu says: "They free us from desires, those who know." They do not offer temptations of new desires. They do not say – "Leave this desire and catch hold of that", for how will this make a difference? But this is difficult for us to do. When someone says, "Leave wealth and catch hold of religion," we find this also difficult; but at least this person offers something in return! The goods are changed but the fist remains clenched. We have caught hold of wealth and he says leave wealth. This is not difficult to understand. Even the most foolish person comes to realise one day, the futility of wealth. If we fail to understand this fact, it is purely because we do not have enough yet. If we do not have wealth, it is all the more difficult to understand its uselessness. Only when its excess reveals its futility, does one realise it was useless striving for; then we realize that we should set out again in some other direction.

Then if a person comes along who incites fresh cravings within you and says, "Leave wealth, aspire for religion", you promptly leave wealth and run after religion – the fist remains intact! Remember, not much intelligence is required to understand the futility of wealth but a great deal of intelligence is

required to understand the worthlessness of religion. I have said that the stupidest man can realise the uselessness of wealth one day but the most intelligent of people cannot understand that religion also is useless. Actually, that which we hold in our grasp, is useless for whatever we hold on to, we b come slaves thereof. Then the clinging, the hanging on to it. is the clenching of the fist and from there the slavery starts.

When you have a hold on something, you feel you are the owner. You feel it is in your grasp and so in your sole possession. But you do not know how gradually it begins to have a hold on you. Now this thing can exist without your hand but you cannot exist without it. If you let go of wealth, it is not affected at all but if someone snatches it away from you, you will find it impossible to live without it. Then who is the slave? Whatever we grasp within our fist, we accept the bondage thereof.

And that which we hope to attain tomorrow, destroys our today. And the irony is, that when we attain it tomorrow, we shall not be present to enjoy it. Our continuous habit of living in the morrow deprives us of the enjoyment of today. When the morrow arrives, it turns into today and you have never had the experience of knowing today. You have never lived in the present day. You live continuously in the future. As soon as the future becomes the present, it becomes useless for you. Your mind pushes forward to the next day.

Now this is interesting: Whenever tomorrow comes. it becomes today and you will become oblivious of it. So it is possible that you have waited for a thing for years, longed for it, prayed for it and when it ultimately comes, you are not there! For the influence of the mind that has prayed for years will, out of sheer habit keep you desiring in the future only. It will promptly begin a new demand for the morrow.

We do this everyday.

It is just as if a man has defective eyes that can see things only in the distance and not close by. He sees a diamond and runs for it but alas, as he approaches the diamond, it begins to fade away from his sight so that when he stands near it, he cannot see it!

Little does this man realise that this has happened whenever he has sighted a diamond. He will run again at the sight of a shining object and he will thus run all his life and it will never occur to him that his eye-sight is fixed – they see at a distance of – say 50 feet. Within 50 feet he is blind. These 50 feet are his blind-spot.

We all live within our blind-spot. Our todays are all in darkness and the morrows are lighted up.

Tomorrow, that is yet not, looks bright and shining. You can do nothing about it except think of its brightness. You can only dream about it. Nothing can be done in tomorrow for tomorrow does not exist. Whatever is to be done can be done today but you are not present in today. Nothing can be done in tomorrow but you are always present there. So life becomes empty. It is therefore that each one of us feels life to be emptiness, there is no fulfillment anywhere. Whatever is attained turns out to be useless, whatever is discovered loses its worthiness.

Lao Tzu says, ”The sage relieves you of all desires.” He does not say, ”Be free from desires,” for if a sage tells you so, you will at once ask, ”Why? for what?” Then the sage will have to tell you, ”For

liberation, for eternal bliss, for God, for heaven" – and a new web of desires starts. Whoever tells you to be free from desires, gives rise to fresh desires within you. Lao Tzu says no such thing. He only explains what a desire is. He says unto you, "This is the wall. If you try to pass through it, you will break your head." He points out the fact. He does not say, "Do not break your head," for you will ask "Why should I not?" He does not say, "Do not try to go through it," for you will again question, "Why not? Is there any other way?"

Remember, he gives you no positive desire. He does not say, "... therefore do not do this." He merely says, "If you do this, this happens."

Buddha had an excellent method of reasoning. He always said, "Do this and this follows." If anyone asked him, "What should we do?" He would reply, "Do not ask me that. You tell me what vou want to do. Then I shall tell you what will follow. More than this, I will not say." He says he does not advise what is to be done. All he can say is, "If you try to pass through the wall, you will break your head. If you pass through the door, you will pass easily. It is up to you – go through the wall or go through the door, it is entirely your wish." You understand the difference?

One way is to tell you clearly – do this. But whenever you are told positively thus, you will at once ask "Why?" Therefore the thinking of Lao Tzu, Buddha or Mahavira, in a profound sense, is negative. They say, "Do this and this follows. If you fall into desires, pain follows." They do not say, "Do not fall into desires and you will be happy;" for if they do, you will say, "Alright we want happiness, show us how to attain it." Now a new desire starts. This is rather subtle and should be properly understood.

It is therefore, that Buddha never raised the topic of Paramatman or Liberation. Lao Tzu too never talked of God. Therefore when his book first reached the West, people questioned whether it was a religious book, for it contained no topic on heaven and hell or God or of good and bad actions. What is this man talking about? When people asked Buddha, "Does God exist?" He remained quiet. He would say, "Ask only if the world is." When he was asked, "What happens in liberation?" He simply kept quiet. Buddha had thirteen questions prepared, which he forbade anyone from asking. When he entered a village, a drummer announced his arrival and also that no one was to ask these 13 questions for they would not be answered.

Buddha's opponents spread the rumour that he could not answer these questions. They challenged him to answer these questions if he could or to declare his inability to do so. You can imagine Buddha's predicament.

This has been the predicament of the sage always in this world.

Buddha knows but he does not want to answer. He does not even say he knows for if he says he knows, people would press him for an answer. Buddha says, "I remain silent, I do not answer for if I tell you that I know, that even will arouse desires within you. Then you will want to know what I know." Buddha never spoke about the open skies. He only spoke about the various chains that bind a person and the reason for their doing so. "You are tied in chains," says Buddha, "Land I give you expositions on the open skies! Then you will remain content in your bondage and dream of the free skies above. These dreams will then become a hindrance rather than a help to break your chains." Then there is also the fear of the person becoming so engrossed in the dream that he fails to see the prison that holds him. Yet another possibility is that he might become so excited and restless to break the chains that he will not have the calm and serenity required to shake off the bondage!

Buddha says, "Ask me not about the skies, I know your hands are tied with a thousand chains. I know why they are and also how they can be broken. I do not even tell you why you should break them. If you want to break them. this is the path, this is the method."

Lao Tzu says, "The sage frees you of your desires." They do not tell you to be rid of your desires; rather they endeavour to free you of your desires. This doing is of two kinds: One is, they lay open the very structure of desires. The other is, they themselves lead a desire-free life. I told you about Confucius returning disappointed from Lao Tzu. Lao Tzu accompanied him up to his door. He saw him looking sad and said he was not happy to see him sad. Confucius replied, "That I was bound to be for I had come to hear your wise counsel." Lao Tzu said, "Turn round and have a good look at me once again. If that becomes a counsel, you will not have returned empty-handed."

People like Buddha and Lao Tzu are living lessons in life.

Confucius looked back but it seems he did not get any message for he told his disciples later on, "His talks went right over my head. The man is unique – he is a veritable lion. One is afraid to stand before him! Yet I could not understand anything. When I pressed him too much, he simply said, "Look at me!" It does not seem that Confucius understood him for one must have eyes to see. Confucius had come filled with the desire of attaining knowledge whereas Lao Tzu was present, here and now. Confucius' eyes were in the future. He was looking forward to attain something that would open the door to salvation and bliss – some treasures of experience; whereas the man who stood before him, was present there in his sheer Presence. Confucius failed to notice him for his eyes were elsewhere. He had come with the desire to gain something from him which would be useful in the future. Therefore it is not possible that he saw Lao Tzu for what he was.

We also miss. It is not that Confucius alone missed. We fail to see many times.

If you were to pass by Buddha, or Lao-Tu or Mahavira, there is one in a million chance that you become aware of their presence.

Bahauddin was a Sufi fakir. The richest man of the town visited him every day and addressed him thus: "You are the sun on earth. Darkness flees at the sight of you!" or "You are as cool as the moon. You are nectar itself." Bahauddin would laugh every time he said such things. One day when that man left, one of his disciples told him, "Master, this is strange behaviour on your part! This man reveres you so much and you answer him with a scoffing laugh as if he had said something wrong!"

Bahauddin caught hold of the disciple's hand and said, "Come with me." They went to the shop of the man in question. Bahauddin had only changed his cap. Otherwise he was in the same attire. They bought something from his shop and returned. On the way Bahauddin told his disciple, "Did you see? It never occurred to him that I am the sun!" They had talked to the man for fifteen minutes, he himself had attended on them and even cheated them! The disciple said, "He may have been too busy. He must have forgotten." The next day they went again and thus they went for a full year! Now Bahauddin was what he was but the shopkeeper did not recognise him and this went on for 365 days. Bahauddin went to his shop in one attire or the other and bought things off him. He dragged his disciple along with him and all these 365 days the man would visit Bahauddin in the evenings and pay his respects. After 365 days, one day when he came thus, Bahauddin said, "Stop this nonsensical talk! For 365 days I came to you and you could not see even a small lamp in me

what to say of the sun? You are a downright liar! All you are concerned with, is to be known as a devotee of a great saint."

If you meet Mahavira with a label on him, you will bow with respect for you met a Tirthankar! If he has no label you will inform the police that a man was going about naked in the streets of Bombay!

Some time ago some sannyasins had gathered here. There is one sannyasin of mine who likes to go about naked. I warned him not to go about naked in Bombay so he poor man began to go about in a loin cloth! He came to Woodlands and I received complaints! One person came and said that this was not in keeping with the dignity of this place that a man should go about in a loin cloth – and he was a Digambar Jain himself who complained thus!

I asked him, if Mahavira were to come to Woodlands what would we do? This poor man has at least a loin cloth on. He said the case of Mahavira was different. "How will you recognise him?" I asked, "Will he have a label on him? And how many people recognised Mahavira in his own times?"

Many a time we pass by him but alas. our eyes are fixed elsewhere! We cannot see what is near us and it often happens, we do not see a thing just because it is too close to us. Lao Tzu says, "The sage frees you from desire so that you can see that which is closer than the closest, that which is Paramatman." Lao Tzu does not say there is no liberation. He says you cannot desire liberation. Lao Tzu does not say there is no God. He says you cannot desire God. When there is no desire, when all desires are extinct, then what remains, is God.

Buddha too, does not say there is no salvation. He says only this – do not desire. Desire nothing, not even salvation – then you are in beatitude! Understand this difference.

You cannot make beatitude an object of your desire, it cannot be the fulcrum of your ambition, it cannot be the target of your aspirations. No, only when you let go all bows and arrows you find that you are standing within beatitude. In fact, you are always in beatitude but because of your desires you have been wandering afar. Desires drive you astray whereas beatitude is here. God is here very close to us, desires are far away. Therefore God and desire never meet. Desire is away, God is close by; desire is in the future, God is in the present; desires are for the morrow God is for today.

Therefore Lao Tzu says, "They liberate you from knowledge and desires."

And where there are people who are filled with sheer blank knowledge, they try to prevent them as much as possible from putting such knowledge into use. Generally, people are filled with such knowledge so they try their best to dissuade them from using this knowledge. This seems strange.

The common sadhu and saint always exhorts people to practise what they preach. After his discourse, the Sadhu invariably says, "Do not leave behind here what I have told you. Keep it carefully with you and act accordingly." He presses them to take a vow that they would. And here is Lao Tzu who says, "The sage takes care that the Sadhaka does not stray into knowledge. He tries to save him from acting according to his information." For all information is borrowed. It is like a bird trying to fly with borrowed wings.

It is very interesting to note that information has to be inculcated in one's conduct whereas knowledge becomes ones natural behaviour. Understand the difference.

Knowledge has not to be inculcated in one's demeanour. The moment knowledge is attained it pervades into all our actions It has not to be practised. If knowledge has to be practised, it is not worth a penny. Now I know if I put my hand in fire, it will burn. If this is only information, I shall have to make an effort lest my hand goes into the fire. Now, if this is my knowledge that the hand burns if put into fire. will I have to make an effort to stop the hand from going into the fire? No I shall have to make no effort. The hand will not go into the fire; I will not have even to think about it. The matter ends here. There shall be no meeting between fire and me.

I know that poison kills a man. Do I then have to go to a temple and take a vow that I shall never drink poison? If you hear a man making such a vow, what will you think of him? You will say this man is afraid, he might drink poison sometime or the other. He does not know anything for if he did, his vows were useless.

All those who make vows of austerity that they will not do this and they will not do that are people who are acting on information. Someone tells them, anger is bad so they try to curb anger. Someone says desires are bad so they curb their desires.

Lao Tzu says, "The sage tries as much as is in his power to refrain people from acting on information." They can only tell them as much as is in their power. There is no way to force anyone. They can only point at the pit and warn you that you will fall. But he who vows to act on information gradually becomes a false person and a moment comes when his actions so engulf him that he completely forgets they are false.

If a man has decided that anger is bad after reading and hearing others and not by knowing himself, his personality will be a false one.

One has not to decide that anger is bad by learning about it. He who knows anger is bad, steps out of it. That which you know as poisonous, you remain away from. So what would a sage say? He will say, "Be angry and know that anger is bad." Make no inferences from the Scriptures. The sage does not say the Shastras are wrong. Those who have known, have written the shastras but when those who have not, read them and get acquainted with that knowledge and begin to act on them, things go wrong.

The sage will always say, "Know the facts, live through them and recognise them." Then whatever is bad, will fall off and whatever is good will persist. The ignorant Sadhu urges people to shun the evil and embrace the good. The sage says, "Know what is good and what is evil." Then what remains, after knowing, know that as good and what drops off, know that as evil. That is evil which remains in acquired knowledge and which falls on knowing. Good is that which has to be brought in by effort in acquired knowledge and which comes on its own when the knowing occurs. It follows knowledge like a shadow.

If you have ever known, you will understand me. The trouble is we have never known anything, we have simply heard.

Is it not wonderful that a man in fifty years of his life-time loses his temper thousands of times, yet he does not know what anger is? He reads a book which says anger is evil, and vows not to be angry. After being angry thousands of times, this man knows not what anger is. Then will he know it simply by reading a few words? Then it would be a miracle!

A thousand times I visit a house of ill-fame and know not it was bad to do so. Then by reading a book will I come to know it is wrong to go into this house and vow that I shall not? The vow betrays that as yet I have a mind to go there. Against whom do we take an oath? Who tells us to be angry? No one. So it is against our own selves that we take vows. No one tells us to be angry. On the other hand, all the world preaches – 'Leave anger!' Nor are we taught in our schools and colleges, the art of losing temper. Yet we go on being angry in spite of the fact that all are temples and churches and Gurudwaras preach against anger.

I have heard that as a priest was once giving a discourse in the church on kindness and amiability, a fly came and sat on his nose. "For example" he said, "This fly that is sitting on my nose, is no enemy of mine. I have no ill will towards it so I do not even show it away. It too, was created by God! It is one of His beautiful creations." Then suddenly he realised it was a bee and not a fly and he shook it off in horror! He forgot that even the bee is God's creation!

Everywhere we are counselled – do not be angry, do not do this, do not do that, and we keep on doing exactly those very things. Then whom shall we vow against? No vow can stand against you. Remember it is the weaker part of you that takes the oath. As soon as you take a vow, you split yourself into two, and the vowing part of you is the minor part, which is weak.

The stronger part requires no vows to work. Do you have to vow to keep on being angry? Do you have to vow that you shall not get up early in the morning? The major part of you works without your vows and this part of you is 90

It is said that a Christian fakir followed the ten commandments very regularly. A man slapped him on one cheek, he gave him the other, for that is what Jesus has said you should do. Now the other fellow was also very persistent. He slapped him on the other cheek also. Now Jesus has only said, "Offer your other cheek" meaning thereby that the assailant would feel humbled and fall on his feet. He has made no provision for this kind of a situation! Now the poor fakir did not know what to do?

Since there was no saying of Jesus he could go by, the fakir lifted his hand and dealt a blow on the other person. His adversary reminded him, "Have you forgotten all about Jesus?" "No I have not," said the fakir, "but Jesus has spoken about one cheek only. There are no instructions about the third for there is no third cheek. So I used my own commonsense which said I should strike back in return."

This commonsense was present when the first two slaps were given and that is the authentic sense of the man. It is this sense that will stand by his stead in his time of need. But words that we hear, stick within the mind. Then we make these words form the pivot of all our actions so much so, that we even swear by them.

Lao Tzu says. "It is therefore that the saint restrains them from acting on their information." They say, "Do not go by your acquired information. Attain knowledge, actions will then follow."

When this state of Non-Action is attained, then the good order that comes into being, is universal. Knowledge is Non-active. It is not an act but a condition – a splendid lustrous, condition. All is filled with light and everything becomes perfectly clear. The darkness has disappeared and there is no smoke in the eyes. The vision now is pure. This is a condition that involves no action. Now no

action is required by the saint to conduct himself for his conduct requires no calculated action. Now the illumined state he is in, will decide all his actions. Henceforth his feet will walk only towards the temple – now the feet have not to be brought back from the house of ill-fame.

I have heard that once Nasruddin took a vow never to step into a tavern. He was a strong-willed man. In the evening he went out. The tavern was before him. He shut his eyes and walked away as fast as h could. He must have gone about fifty steps when he stopped and opened his eyes. He was surprised at himself! "Well-done Nasruddin" He said to himself. "What a man of iron resolve you are! You left the pub, fifty steps behind! Come now, I shall stand you a drink," and he turned his steps back to the tavern and celebrated his victory.

Now the difference is, he is now giving a drink to Nasruddin. This is all rationalisation. Now he does not say, "I am drinking" or that "I have broken my vow". The vow is fulfilled when he walked away fifty steps. Now then he who has performed this feat, should he not be felicitated?

Knowledge is non-active, it is absolutely serene – not a wave of action – like a river that is still. Absolutely void – such is the state of a man of knowledge.

Says Lao Tzu, "When such a state of non-action is attained then the order that forms is universal." Then it is beyond censure and beyond contradiction.

There are three things to be known: One is that knowledge is a state of no-action where the question is not so much of doing as of knowing. It is not a question of doing but of being. The question is not of doing something to attain knowledge. The question is: How should I be so that knowledge reveals itself? In what state should I be so that the vision becomes straight and clear, pure and unaffected? The question is not of doing something – like giving up theft or deceit. No, it is not a question of leaving something and catching something. Rather, How should I look at life? Vision is all important. I should not worry about acquired knowledge rather, I should keep away from it. I should accept my ignorance, I should experience life, today now. I should live in total awareness here and now.

Then that non-active state begins to form where a person becomes like a silent pool. And in this moment of serenity all disorder falls of its own. All that was wrong, drops by itself. No effort is required to be rid of it. All that was impure in life, we suddenly find it is non-existent, as if a lamp is lighted and the darkness has flown away. Darkness has not to be pushed out. Light a lamp and darkness is no more. This order is something quite different.

There is one order of things that is cultivated. We can teach a monkey to sit still by the use of a stick. He can sit still like Buddha in padmasans and if the stick is kept before him, he will sit thus for hours. This will not make a Buddha out of him. Many people sit thus in padmasana and nothing happens within them. The fear of the stick – some bell, some sin or death, some illness some anxiety – surrounds them from everywhere.

Someone asked Nasruddin, "Do you pray before you sleep at night?" Nasruddin said, "I pray regularly, I never miss my prayers at night." "Do you pray in the morning also?" He was asked, "No" he replied, "Where is the need? I am scared of darkness, so I pray. Where is the necessity to pray in the morning?"

You are afraid and prayer is born. The stick is before you – you sit in padmasana, the eyes close automatically and the beads of the mala (rosary) begin to slip one after the other! Thus are born our prayers and worships – all out of fear.

Tamer the Lame once sent for Nasruddin. Tamer was a very dangerous man. He had heard of Nasruddin's fame – that he was a wise man and only one of his kind. Wise men are always a little strange for each is moulded in his own set pattern. "I have heard you are a very wise man," Said Tamer to Nasruddin. The Mulla looked at him – there he sat with a naked sword in his hand. "If I say 'Yes', what will you do?" He asked Tamer. "And if I say 'No', what then? I must first make sure." Nasruddin told him.

"What will I do?" Tamer shouted, "Everyone says you are wise. Are you or are you not? If you are not why have you not denied this so far? I shall have your head cut off! If you are, say so." Nasruddin said, "Yes, I am". He thought it was better than being beheaded. "What proof is there, that you are wise?" Tamer asked.

Nasruddin looked down very solemnly and said, "I can see right down into Hell." Then he lifted his face up to the skies and said, "I can see all the seven heavens." "What is the secret that reveals the heavens and hell?" Asked Tamer, Nasruddin replied, "Only fear. There is neither heaven nor hell that I can see. It is the sight of your naked sword that brings them before my eyes. That is the basis of all my wisdom. Put your sword away and talk man to man or else, I am ready to perform any miracle you say. Who likes to lose his life?"

Fear makes you do a lot of things. All your life is filled with fear. The order that comes into being through fear is no order, for the volcano keeps rumbling within.

People like Lao Tzu speak of a different quality of order. There is quite another rule, another law of life, that does not come by any arrangement; it cannot be implanted. It is not born out of fear or desire, nor is it caused by any enticement. Rather, it happens on its own by the light that illumines the state of no-action. And when this state comes into being, it is universal. Universal means, that this order, this rule, cannot be broken under any conditions. There are no exceptions to it. It is present in every condition.

As the water of the ocean is salty, no matter from where you taste it, so the sage whose life is endowed with knowledge, can be 'tasted' from any side. Whether asleep or awake, in whatever condition he is tried or tested, he is universal. His order is eternal. There is never a slip, never a mistake in his rules, for here are no rules. Understand this well.

You might be thinking that his laws are so strong that there cannot be a slip. That is no so for a rule however strong, is liable to slip. Lao Tzu says, "The wise man's rules never slip for he has no rules." So where is the question of their breaking? The sage makes no rules. His knowledge sets the code of his behaviour. He has set no limitations, no decorums. Decorum has flowered naturally out of his knowledge. He does not speak the truth for the sake of some allurement or greed. He call speak only the truth, there is no other remedy for him.

And it is not perhaps correct that he speaks the truth, it would be better to say that whatever he says, is the truth. His speech and Truth are not two different things. Now there is no means for

untruth. Not that he has vowed never to lie, not that he has taken an oath to speak the truth and nothing but the truth. Words are always misleading and wrong; and it is always the weak who make use of them. When a person says he has made a firm resolve to speak the truth, it means there is a strong condition for telling the untruth within him. That is not so with the sage. Untruth has dropped and only Truth remains. Whatever is now spoken is the truth; Whatever is now lived is auspicious, whatever happens now, is beautiful.

Therefore it is Universal.

Enough for today.

CHAPTER 12

The supreme void, the supreme ancestor, the ideal support – Tao

22 July 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 4: SUTRA 1

CHARACTER OF TAO

THE TAO IS LIKE THE EMPTINESS OF A VESSEL; AND IN OUR EMPLOYMENT OF IT WE MUST BE ON OUR GUARD AGAINST ALL FULLNESS. HOW DEEP AND UNFATHOMABLE IT IS, AS IF IT WERE THE HONOURED ANCESTOR OF ALL THINGS; (OR LIKE THE FOUNTAINHEAD OF ALL THINGS).

Tao is emptiness, emptiness like the emptiness in the inside of a vessel.

When there is nothing filled within, then only is Tao attained. When the consciousness is empty, then only does the experience of Religion come. When the individual is no more, when he can say, "I am not", then only can he know God. Understand it this way: The more an individual is filled with his individuality, the lesser will he feel God and the more empty the individual, the more perfect will be the manifestation of God.

Take it this way: When it rains, the mountain tops remain empty and void for they are already full. The lakes and the hollows quickly get filled for they are empty. Now the rain does not discriminate. It falls equally everywhere. But the mountains are so filled with themselves, that there is no space for anything else. All the waters therefore, run to the valleys and the lakes. This seems contradictory – that which is full, remains empty, whereas that which is empty, is filled up. The lake has only one quality – that it is empty and the mountains have only one disqualification – that they are full.

Lao Tzu says, "Religion is like an empty vessel." Tao is the other name for Religion, and he who wants to attain Religion has to guard himself against all fullness. This is a very strange thing – from all kinds of fullness. It is not that if the vessel is filled with gold, it will cause hindrance; if the vessel is filled with knowledge, that too will cause hindrance; if the vessel is filled with renunciation, that too will cause hindrance. Whatever be the contents, it will cause hindrance. The vessel must be empty.

But in life we are all busy trying to fill ourselves from all directions We feel life is meant for this purpose alone. Through some means, through some path, we try to be full and perfect. Parents tell their children, the preacher exhorts his listeners, the teachers tell their pupils and the Guru his disciples – "Will you let life go by like this? You were born imperfect will you die imperfect also? Do you not want to be perfect? You shall have lived in vain if you have not attained fullness. Attain something. Do not be empty."

And here is Lao Tzu who says that he who wants to attain Religion has to guard himself against all fulness. He has neither to become perfect nor remain imperfect. He has to become Empty. If we try to understand it this way, it will be easier:

Ordinarily, we are imperfect wherever we are. We are never empty, we are never full. Our being is imperfect, incomplete. We are always in-between – we are neither empty nor perfect. And this holds good for all of us and not a special few. Whoever and whatever is within Existence, are all in-between. On one side is the Emptiness and on the other is Perfection and we are in-between.

And the order of our arrangement is to progress from this midpoint towards perfection.

Lao Tzu says, "We have to proceed towards the Void from this mid-point." So all our efforts is towards perfection from this imperfection. The woe of our lives is this only, that there is no fulfillment anywhere: our love is imperfect, our knowledge is imperfect – nothing is perfect – and we long for fulfillment in any direction! Love should be so fulfilling that we do not long for more. We long for the feeling of fulfillment. But I tell you, that the more we try to fill ourselves, the more we become aware of the emptiness within. There is no fulfillment.

Therefore, the Age that is desirous and eager and restless for perfection, experiences emptiness to the same extent.

The West has become fully educated for the first time. The West has developed considerably in education for the first time in the history of the world. But strangely enough, the Western mind is filled with the feeling of emptiness at the same time. America has touched the peaks of wealth as no other nation has in the history of the world – it is almost up to the point of perfection. But this is only approximate perfection for there cannot be full perfection. When we look back at our poverty of the past we also feel we have made great headway towards developing wealth. You must understand the meaning of approximation. Perfect we cannot be, no matter where we are but if we take a jungle tribe – say the Adivasis of Bastar – and compare it to New York, then certainly New York has almost reached the point of perfection.

There is a story of a little boy who one day returned very jubilant from school. He had won a prize. He had answered a question correctly. When his mother asked what the question was and what was his answer, he said, "The question, was 'How many legs does the cow have?' and I replied,

'Three'". The mother was shocked. "The cow has four legs, you silly boy!" She exclaimed. "That I also found out now," said the boy. "But the other boys said two and I said three, so I was nearer the truth. Therefore, I got the prize." This is the meaning of approximation.

If anyone has reached closest to perfection of wealth, then these proverbial three legs America has perfected. And now it is almost near the fourth leg. But the fourth leg cannot be for within the human situation it is not possible. Man's very being is imperfect, therefore whatever he does cannot be but imperfect. If I am imperfect, how can that which I do be perfect? It can be approximately nearer perfection when compared to something else. So with regard to wealth, America's vessel is almost 3/4th full.

But the feeling of helplessness and misery that is rampant in America, is not found elsewhere. All the thinkers of America are now studying one simple aspect of life – the feeling of emptiness, meaninglessness. Everything is meaningless and empty; nothing is full – and they are at the point of saturation of wealth!

What is the matter?

Man cannot be perfect. To be imperfect, is his destiny. The very manner of his being is such, that he will always remain imperfect, no matter where he be. An imperfect mind always tries for perfection. That too, is the destiny of man. There is agony in the imperfection. There is the feeling of worthlessness and inferiority and also of wretchedness and humiliation. So the endeavour for perfection arises out of this imperfection of being. And whatever arises out of imperfection can never be perfect The result will always be a by-product – imperfect.

It is 'I', who am imperfect, who is trying to be perfect. All my efforts will be imperfect. All my results will be defective for the effort as well as the result both came out of me. My actions cannot be bigger than myself. My accomplishment cannot go beyond me. They will all be within the boundary of my being. No singer can sing better than himself, no mathematician can solve problems as well as he can. Or can he?

Our actions come out from within our being. We cannot be better than ourselves, although we are for ever trying to be better than what we are. This only gives rise to melancholia

The endeavour is great but the result is nil. The same imperfection stands out in the result. We go round and round and meet our own self! When the seeker is imperfect, whatever he attains will be imperfect. We cannot attain anything more than ourselves.

This is the condition. We are in the middle – imperfect, incomplete. The incomplete mind aspires to be perfect. From imperfection is born desire – the desire to be perfect. Remember, there is no desire for perfection in perfection. That is meaningless. It is in imperfection that the desire for perfection arises. The desire is always for the opposite. If we are poor, we aspire for riches. If we are ill, we long to be healthy. We are imperfect, so we strive to be perfect. Desires are all logical, reasonable. It is natural that the desire for perfection should arise in an imperfect mind.

There cannot be any development in this direction for the imperfect can never become the perfect through any effort, any practice, any sadhana or any bodily effort. All sadhanas, all exercises evolve out of the imperfect and will always bear the stamp of imperfection.

If an imperfect man attains perfection then he was never imperfect for then, imperfection has no meaning.

This is the state of affairs. All man's efforts, all his endeavours – no matter in which direction – are all aimed at attaining perfection. But Lao Tzu says, "Be empty!" He says, "Be on guard against any thought of being perfect for that is the trap; that alone is the plague that destroys man." Therefore – understand yourself, understand that you are not to succumb to the lure of being perfect. Be empty, be a void and the wonder is, as soon as you become empty, you are filled, you are perfect! The void is the most perfect potential on this earth.

Take it this way: There is a pot filled with water. Can you visualise a pot that is filled with water in which you cannot add a further drop of water? We say the pot is full, but if one more drop can still be contained within it, we shall have to say it is not full. No matter how full a pot is, it is never fully full, for a drop more can always be added.

In the course of his travels, Nanak happened to reach a village where lived a fakir who it was known had reached perfection. Nanak sent word to him that he would like to meet him in order to know what sort of perfection was his. The fakir sent a cup filled with water to the brim, in answer to his request. Nanak placed a flower on top of the water and sent it back. The fakir came running to Nanak and fell at his feet. He said, "I thought I had reached perfection!" Nanak replied, "Whatever man does in order to be perfect, leaves some place unfilled, incomplete. However much he tries, a simple flower can still be accommodated in his filled cup. And a flower is no small thing!"

Now a filled pot always has place enough to take in a drop more of water but supposing the vessel is empty – can it be more empty? No. An empty vessel is absolutely empty. Had the fakir sent an empty vessel, Nanak would have found himself in difficulty, for it was impossible to empty it more! The full can be filled yet more but the void cannot be emptied more. Therefore there is no perfection in saturation, in fullness, whereas in emptiness, perfection takes place. Emptiness is Perfect. Hence there is only one perfection in man's existence and that is, perfect emptiness – to be completely empty.

Therefore Lao Tzu says in this sutra that Tao is like an empty vessel – not a full vessel, mind you. Therefore whoever has a longing for Religion or for Tao, should avoid all temptations of perfection of any kind. Ego will try to fulfill itself. The complete Sadhana of the Ego is, how to be perfect. Tao is attained by him who is empty – where the ego is completely annihilated.

Man can empty himself – and there is a reason for this. We may perhaps not attain what we do not have but we can certainly leave that which we already possess! We have no hold on that which we do not have but we have a complete hold on what we have. I have said before, that man is in the middle – on one side is the emptiness and on the other, perfection, fullness. Man is incomplete – some things he has, some things he has not. Now there are two ways. (1) If he attains also that which he does not have, he can become perfect. (2) If he lets go all that he already possesses, he will become empty. Now it is not certain that we will attain all that we do not have, for it is not m our hands; but it is entirely within our hands to discard what we possess. We have to take no one's help.

Now this is interesting: If you want to be perfect, you will have to pray to God – and it may still not be possible; but if you want to be empty you require no help from any God! Your own self is enough.

There is no need to ask. This is why prayers have no place in religions that are based on the order of emptiness. People like Buddha and Lao Tzu whose teachings are based on Emptiness, have given no credence to prayers. Prayers hold no meaning for them. There is nothing to be asked for, then who is to be prayed to and for what? We shall discard all that we have and be rid of it. In order to obtain what we do not have, we shall have to knock at someone's door, we shall have to put out our hands in supplication.

There is another thing worth considering: Time is required to acquire what we do not possess. For that which we do not have, is not likely to be attained this very day. It may be attained tomorrow or the day after or even in the next life. But what I have, can be left instantaneously. No time is required. I can leave it today or tomorrow, it is all up to me and if I postpone it, then I alone am responsible for it. If I do not attain what I do not have, I am not responsible for not attaining it. It can be that in spite of all my efforts, I do not attain it.

You may wish the skies to enter your compound or the sun to be enclosed in your house but that would merely be your desires. For this to happen, depends on thousands of factors and not you alone. Therefore you have to ask for help.

There is no place for prayers in Lao Tzu. He says there is no question of prayers – just leave all that you have. There is another interesting factor and the mathematics thereof is worth noting. Supposing a million rupees is the target for perfection. If I have ten rupees, my journey to the millionth rupee is going to be very long. If you have 90,000 rupees, your journey will be much shorter and if you need only Rs. 51 – to complete the figure, you are about to reach, whereas I am very far away from the target. The journey towards fulness does not make us equal for we each start with different amounts. Some have 10, some 10,000, yet another has 75,000 or even 95,000. All these create differences in distance. And if we create differences in Perfection, then we do not consider all men to be equal.

Now if you have Rs. 99,999 and I have Rs. 1 and if we both want to proceed towards Emptiness, we can both go together. We are equals. I leave my rupee, you leave your rupees. I shall be empty, you shall be empty. Only the journey towards Emptiness has a quality of equality and no other.

So the Perfection-oriented communities can never be equal. Only those that proceed towards emptiness can be equal. Before Emptiness, Rs. S or Rs. 95,000 are both equal. I will renounce my Rs. 51 – and reach exactly where you will reach after renouncing your Rs. 95,000. It is not that you will attain a bigger emptiness and I a smaller one. Our Emptiness will be the same. The vessel that is full is emptied by overturning and the vessel that has only one drop, is also emptied by overturning. There will be no hierarchy in the emptiness of your vessel and mine. There is no one great or small. We shall be both – just empty.

But if you have an eye towards Perfection, then equality is not possible; it is absolutely impossible. And then the journeys will be all different. Also it cannot be told when it will end. Time will be required and the religion that requires time to be attained, is also weakened by Time. It is but natural that such a religion does not remain unconditional for this religion has a time-limit.

If we were to understand it properly, such a religion becomes a time-product for it will arise according to time. Then such a religion cannot go beyond time, for that which is born through time, also dies

in time. That which has its one extremity in Time cannot have its other extremity outside of time. Emptiness however, can be instantaneous, this very moment – now. It is wrong to say instantaneous. Actually, Emptiness happens outside of Time, whereas fulness happens within Time. The moment you are empty, you are outside of Time and it requires no time to become empty.

Therefore, when anyone went up to Lao Tzu and said, "I am a sinful man, I have committed many sins, how long will it take me to attain liberation?" and Lao Tzu would say, "You can be liberated here and now." Lao Tzu can say this for he knows you have not to be anything. Rather, you have to leave even that which you are!

Therefore Lao Tzu has not pondered over the question of how many years and how many lives it will take. He says, "Here and now." Therefore, the nirvana that Lao Tzu has talked about is 'Sudden Enlightenment.' It can take place this very minute. There is no question of losing even a minute but if you do not desire, it is a different matter. There is no other hindrance save yourself.

Lao Tzu says, "There is no other obstacle. If you yourself do not desire it, then it is a different matter. There is no other hindrance. All else are excuses."

It will be difficult for the mind to understand that the postponement of liberation is our own evasion and not to attain nirvana, is also our own contrivance. No sin keeps us away. It is only we ourselves who do not desire it and hence seek explanations, to explain ourselves away. According to Lao Tzu, there is no intervention of time – be empty this moment, open your fists here and now!

Lao Tzu also says that fulfillment can never be peaceful. A half-filled vessel always makes a lot of sound. A vessel 3/4th filled also makes a sound. Lao Tzu says, "No matter how full the vessel is, it makes a sound." Only an empty vessel is silent – Why? You might argue that a vessel can be so full, there is no sound. But Lao Tzu says 'no'. He says if a vessel is full, one thing is proved that there are two things. One is the vessel and the other, its contents. And where there is duality, perfect serenity is impossible. So the person who is eager for perfection is filled with duality and hence the conflict continues.

Only the man who is established in Emptiness is outside of conflict for then there is no other. The vessel is empty, how can there be any sound? There is nothing to knock against the vessel. Remember, in the advaita (the single), tranquility is possible for there is no 'other' to cause the conflict.

Where there are two, there is bound to be friction and it is interesting to note, it has its own ideology. When you fill yourself with something, take it for certain. it cannot be yourself. Whatever you fill yourself with, will be different and apart from you, then be it wealth or knowledge or even God. And can you ever he at peace with the 'other'? Now the vessel cannot fill itself with itself. It has to be water or milk or poison or nectar – things other than itself. If the vessel wishes to be filled by itself, it will have to be empty – that is the only way. Or else, it will be filled with something. Then whatever name we give, makes no difference, although we tend to think that it does.

A well-known, priest went to meet Lincoln. He began to talk of high things like heaven and hell and God. "Could it be that these are mere names?" asked Lincoln. "Certainly not" replied the man. Lincoln said, "May I ask you a question? How many legs does a cow have?" "What a question to

ask a learned man like me, who talks only of heaven and hell? Well, if you insist, it has four legs," said the priest. "Suppose we include the tail as a limb, then how many legs would the cow have?" Lincoln asked again. "Five", said the priest.

"That is your mistake", said Lincoln. "If you call the tail a leg, it does not become a leg. Your saying will make no difference, for the tail is a tail because it performs a specific function. Also legs are not legs merely in name, they too have a specific purpose, which the tail cannot fulfil. Your giving it a name, makes no difference." We live in the illusion of names. Man's greatest delusion is that of labelling things.

There is a Sufi story: A squirrel was sitting under a tree. A fox happened to pass by but the squirrel did not run away. "You foolish thing!" He said to the squirrel, "Aren't you afraid? Do you know I am a fox and I can break you in two?" "Have you any proof, any certificate to prove that you are a fox?" asked the squirrel. The fox was shocked! Never had a lesser animal addressed him thus. Rather, they ran at the sight of him! He was terribly upset. He said, "Wait, I'll get you one."

The fox went to the lion and said, "Kindly give me a certificate. I have been insulted. An ordinary squirrel wants a testimony to prove my credentials!" This he told the lion, whereas within his mind, he was boiling. "This is an outrage," he said to himself. "Never has this happened in the history of animals!"? He took the certificate and went back to the squirrel, who was still waiting for him. He flourished the certificate on her face and then began to read aloud. "This is to certify that this is a fox and a very dangerous animal. The squirrel should beware of him....." and so on. He was so engrossed in reading his own praise that he dwelt longer on every word than was necessary. When he finished, he looked up to find that the squirrel was missing. She never returned.

When the fox went again to the lion, he found a deer standing next to the lion and asking him for proof that he was a lion. Now the fox wondered what the lion would do! Whom would he ask for a certificate?

The lion told the deer thus: "Look here! If I were hungry, you would not have had the leisure to ask me for a testimony and if I am not hungry, I do not care what you think."

The fox asked the lion, "Your Majesty, why did you not advise me to say thus to the squirrel? Why did you give me a certificate? I would have set that impudent creature right!" "But you never told me for whom you wanted the certificate. I thought some stupid human being had asked for it. I have noted of late that the animals of this jungle have also started indulging in the stupidities of human beings."

One of the basic follies of human beings, is this habit of naming, of labelling. Giving a thing a name makes it convenient to deal with. When a man says, "I fill myself with God", he forgets that this is duality, for it makes no difference with what you fill yourself. One thing is certain – you are filling the vessel with something. Then whether it is the world or whether it is God, whether it is love or whether it is prayer, it is immaterial. That is not you. You are the filler of that which is being filled in. Then whatever name you give to that which is being filled into you – whether liberation or the mundane world – makes no difference. The duality remains.

In fact, we can only be filled with 'the other'. If you want to be purely yourself, then there is no other way than becoming empty.

Therefore Lao Tzu says that Tao is like an empty vessel; and in its use, it is required that we are on guard against all kinds of perfections. If we want to make use of Religion, we have to beware of the chaos of all perfections. This requires a little pondering. We shall have to go a little deep into this word 'use'. If Religion is anything, it is the highest use of life. It is the most intrinsic interpretation of life. So if you want to make use of Tao, of Religion, Lao Tse gives only one advice – Be on guard against all types of perfections. Then the use of Religion will start. For no sooner a man becomes empty, Religion becomes active, dynamic. And as soon as a man is filled with something, Religion becomes inactive, it is pressed down.

But Religion is not destroyed.

There is empty space in this room. We fill this room up with so much furniture that there is no space left. What does this mean? Does this mean that the empty space is destroyed? Or does it mean that the empty space has been pushed out of the room and its place taken by the furniture? The empty space cannot go out of the room for the emptiness is not a thing that can go in or out. And where will it go? Outside the room there is already a lot of empty space. There is however, no empty space anywhere in the universe to accommodate this empty space. Then where will this empty space go?

Now another way of deducing that it has been destroyed is that we have filled the room with furniture hence the empty space is destroyed; but nothing can be destroyed – least of all emptiness. Objects can be destroyed but emptiness cannot be annihilated.

Emptiness means that which is not. How can that be annihilated? The presence of a thing is necessary in order to destroy it. Therefore no matter how much you fill up this room – you may fill it with cement completely – even then the emptiness remains where it was. It cannot move out, it cannot be destroyed. Then supposing we decide to stay within this room, would we have to bring back the emptiness? No, we have simply to remove the things that are in it. The empty space will be there where it was once again. Objects merely hide the empty space. Remove the objects and the empty space appears to view.

We also are like that. Emptiness is our nature. It is our religion, it is Tao. We keep on adding things to this emptiness, so much so, that it is completely smothered. It cannot do smothered though. What is meant is, it is hidden from view. Then what is to be done? Lao Tzu says, "Be on guard against this desire of fullness." Leave the desire for fullness. Then what will you do? Throw out all the arrangements you have made towards this aim, with your own hands. The day you throw out all that is within you and become empty, you shall be in the state of the Tao.

And Tao is very active. Emptiness is a dynamic force. This emptiness is very useful.

Actually we make use of only the Emptiness. The meaning of the word 'use' is: as soon as a person becomes empty, he has with other things, thrown the incompleteness also out of him. He has not tried to be perfect (complete) for that requires to amass things, whereas he has thrown out everything. Now if he is not incomplete, what will you call him? He has thrown out all requisites of incompleteness, imperfection. Now he is not even imperfect. Then what will you say about such a man?

We use the word 'empty' so that the eye can begin to see emptiness. The day a man throws out everything within him, the day he gives up all planning for perfection and becomes absolutely empty,

he becomes perfect. To be freed from incompleteness is to be perfect. This is the actual meaning. One way is to unfold each imperfection and remove it bit by bit and become perfect, another way is to step out of the incompleteness, then what remains, is perfection.

This fullness, this perfection, is not yours for you will have passed away together with the things that were thrown out. That fullness is of the Absolute, the Aggregate. It is the fullness of God; and this God is very active and from Him arises all creativity. Then whether it is a seed bursting or a new star being born or whether it is a flower blooming or an individual being born – all the arrangement of this vast Universe accrues from the Supreme Emptiness. This Emptiness is all powerful. There is untold energy within it. In our effort to be perfect, we become beggars by our own hands. No sooner we become empty, we are blessed; we become the masters of the Supreme Wealth.

Therefore it is that Lao Tzu says, "IN ITS USE WE HAVE TO BE ON OUR GUARD AGAINST ALL FULLNESS."

Lao Tzu says again: "HOW IMPRESSIVE, HOW SOLEMN IS THIS EMPTINESS! HOW VAST AND FATHOMLESS IS THIS EMPTINESS! FOR SOOTH, IT IS THE SOURCE OF ALL MATTER! EVERYTHING IS BORN OUT OF IT. OUT OF WHICH EVERYTHING HAS ARISEN, EVERYTHING HAS BEEN BORN – IT IS LIKE A REVERED ANCESTOR" – everyone's father, everyone's mother – "THE FOUNTAIN-HEAD OF ALL!"

Lao Tzu has used very strange words that seem contradictory. First he says "RELIGION IS LIKE AN EMPTY VESSEL." Then he says "HOW BOUNDLESS IT IS!" Now we estimate the depth of objects only. You cannot call an empty river fathomless. You can only call a very full river fathomless, when its waters can be measured. If we call a dry river fathomless, it would be foolish. But Lao Tzu calls just such a river fathomless – a river without any water – Why?

Now this is very interesting. Lao Tzu says, "The river that is full can be measured no matter how deep and unfathomable it be." We may find great difficulty in measuring it but it is measurable all the same. We will find its depth, for objects – matter – cannot be immeasurable. But the river that has no water is immeasurable – for how will you measure it? That which is not, cannot be measured whereas that which is, can be. Therefore a river filled with water is never unfathomable but a river without water becomes immeasurable.

Lao Tzu says, "No matter how full the vessel, it is not unfathomable. An empty vessel is unfathomable, for there is no way of measuring emptiness."

Even a very small emptiness cannot be measured, whereas the vast universe can be measured.

The Hindu philosophy has a term – 'MAYA'. It means – that which can be measured. This word does not mean illusion as is generally understood. It means – that which is measurable is maya. And since it can be measured, it is an illusion. That which can be measured, is not the Truth, for Truth is immeasur-able – it cannot be measured.

Lao Tzu says, "How unfathomable it is!" This needs to be pondered over for a person like Lao Tzu does not utter a single word without a reason. It is with great difficulty that they speak. Speaking is no pleasure for a person like Lao Tzu. It entails a lot of pain and difficulty for he who sets out to speak, is beyond all speech. Therefore they do not utter a single word that is meaningless.

Lao Tzu says, "How unfathomable." He should not have used the word 'how (much)' for with this, the measure starts. 'How (much)' suggests a measure. Then why does Lao Tzu use this word? If Lao Tzu says – 'immeasurable' it sounds logical, but he says, "How immeasurable!" and from here the measure starts. Think again – for Lao Tzu weighs each word he speaks. If Lao Tzu says, "This world is immeasurable," then you can turn round and say, "Then you have measured!"

If I say this world is immeasurable, it means I have tried to measure it. I have reached the corners of the earth. I have seen the whole earth and now I return to say that it is immeasurable. I dive into water, I come back and say that it is fathomless. Then it can be two things. Either I say I could not reach the profoundest depth and so I cannot say it is immeasurable. I can only say I could not reach the depth. It is quite possible that a fathom below the depth I reached may be the bed of the river. So it can mean two things: I could not reach the depth – in that case I have no right to say it is unfathomable. All I can say is, "As far as I could go, was not the bottom of the river. It could be a little way further down, I cannot say." Or it could also mean that I reached the bottom and found it was bottomless! But the fact is, if I reach the very end, I have reached the bottom. Then if I come back and say, "I reached the very end and found there was no bottom" – this would be an absolutely wrong statement. How can you see to the very bottom if there is no bottom? If you reached the end, you have reached the bottom.

Therefore Lao Tzu says, "How unfathomable!" He does not directly call it unfathomable for then it would seem that it has been measured – at least by Lao Tzu, and he has discovered it is unfathomable. Therefore Lao Tzu says, "How unfathomable!" What he means is, however much you try to measure, it is unfathomable. You measure and it is beyond measure. Wherever you reach, it is yet further away; the shores are nowhere in sight. You try infinite ways and yet it is unfathomable! So Lao Tzu does not use the term 'Unfathomable' directly for fear of the illusion of measure.

Therefore, many contradictory statements are made, where entirely opposing words are made use of. When we make use of the term 'fathomless' it conveys the meaning of that which is very very deep – then also it carries the sense of measure. When we say 'How fathomless', then it becomes multi-dimensional, whereas the word fathomless alone, is one dimensional. If we compare this with Mahavira's statements, it will be easier to understand.

Whenever Mahavira wanted to convey the idea of the infinite. he never used the term 'infinite' only. He always said 'infinitely infinite'. When someone questioned, "What is Truth like?" He would reply, "Infinitely infinite". Now it is natural that he should be asked why he made use of the word infinite twice. One should be enough to convey the measuring of infinity, and this joining of two words could be wrong also, for infinity is only one. If there are two infinites then each will form a boundary of the other and then they can no longer be termed infinite. Infinite means that which is infinite, boundless, but here, where the second starts the first must end.

This is why, before Mahavira the word 'infinite' was used directly to convey the infinite. The Upanishads refer to the infinite as the infinite. But infinite is one-dimensional and Mahavira felt that this gives an impression of a measure. If someone says 'the infinite', it seems he knows its dimensions.

So Mahavira says, "Infinitely infinite." It is so infinite that it spreads even beyond the infinite. It is

Infinity (Infinity raised to infinity). When a word becomes multi-dimensional, it becomes a very living word whereas a one-dimensional word, is a dead word.

Lao Tzu could have said "It is fathomless", but he says, "How fathomless!" This is the same as saying it is infinitely infinite. Then he says, "How deep (profound) it is!" It is void and deep. The void is entirely empty, then how is it profound? The river is filled with water, we can say the current is deep.

There are two types of flow in a river: One is a very superficial one, as we see in shallow rivers where beds are also visible at places. Such rivers make a great noise. The water may be a fathom deep but the noise it makes, is tremendous. Such a flow is a shallow flow. Such a river makes a lot of noise – Talks a lot! There is another river whose waters are so deep that even if there are rocks and cliffs beneath, it does not disturb the river at all. The river flows and its flow is hardly visible to the eye. It flows so silently. Then we say the flow of the river is so deep, so profound, that there is no sound whatsoever.

But Lao Tzu refers to emptiness as deep. There is no flow of water here – everything is void, but this is the very reason for its profoundness. Lao Tzu says, "No matter how slowly a river flows," whether you can hear it or not hear it, where there is a flow there is bound to be noise. The sound may be so less – almost subtle – almost inaudible. But where there is a flow, there is bound to be friction and where there is friction, sound is bound to be. So Lao Tzu says, "Only the Void can be deep for there is no sound there."There is no flow, no friction. There is nowhere to go, nowhere to come, everything is tranquil and stable with in itself.

So Lao Tzu says, "How deep, how profound!" He makes use of the adverb 'how' and the reason is to convey the stress on the profundity of his statement and also to convey that the matter has not ended with his statement. He takes care to see that none of his words are closed. Rather, he sees that they are open – each word should be an opening to further exploration. Each word should open the door to further Mystery. When the pundit speaks, his words are closed. None of his words are suggestive of anything ahead. Their words are mere information and nothing more. The so-called Science says, "This is the Truth". Authentic Science only suggests – there is nothing fixed, everything is fluid.

Hints can also be of two kinds. There is one hint that is fixed. If someone points at the moon and keeps the fingers fixed, the moon will have shifted in due course from that point where the finger points. If you really wish to point at the moon, the finger will have to shift with the moon. The indication will have to be alive and it shall have to move with the moon.

People like Lao Tzu, do not consider Truth as a dead unit. They believe it to be a dynamic force. So all their indications are live suggestions. Their finger keeps moving with the moon. In the term 'How', no boundary can be formed, for this 'how' goes beyond all 'how's. It becomes a hint, a suggestion that transcends all words. When Mahavira says 'infinitely infinite' the term does not carry the transcendence that Lao Tzu conveys by using the term 'how'. When Lao Tzu says, 'how', the transcendence goes even beyond. Mahavira repeats the word infinite – infinitely infinite – but then the word seems to get fixed, its resonance becomes somewhat fixed and it seems as if it conveys the impression of a boundary. Then it seems to convey a meaning and we tend to feel that we have understood it. But when a person says, "How unfathomable!" you cannot draw a boundary anywhere round the 'how'.

Lao Tzu says, "How deep, how unfathomable – as though it is the source of all matter." Again he makes use of the term 'as though, as if'. He who has to speak of Truth, has to weigh each word before he utters it. He does not make a categorical statement that it is the source of all matter.

Wahinger has written a book called, "THE PHILOSOPHY OF AS IF". This book is one of the few priceless books written in the West in the last hundred years. He has called it the philosophy of 'as-if'. Whoever has stated, "Truth is such," has made a wrong statement for man can only say 'as-if'. If he tries to say beyond this, it trespasses all limits, it is only an exhibition of man's ego.

Wahinger does not say, "God created the world." He says, "as if God created the world." The world is so beautiful – as if God had created it! For who else can create such beauty? He makes no definite statement to prove that God made the world.

Wahinger says, "If I give proof that God is, someone else can disprove it too." If one section of the world says 'God is' and gathers proofs thereof, another section can as well say, 'God is not', and give proofs thereof. And when a person says, 'God is not' we have no right to say, he is transcending all limits, for this race was started first by those who declared that God is. It is the Theist who has first gone beyond limits by making declarations that are beyond human concept. The atheist has merely followed him. One man says, "I can prove that God is." This is a matter beyond man. Does God require a testimony of approval from you to prove His existence?

Wahinger says, "I can only say this, that the more I think, the more I seek, I find it seems as if God created the world." This is not a mathematical solution he has found. He says, this is the feeling of his heart. Whatever he sees, be it a little flower, his heart tells him such creation could only be of God. He cannot bring himself to believe that such beauty has sprung out from among the stones, just like that. "Therefore", he says, "It is as if God has made it."

Lao Tzu says, "It is as if this profound emptiness, this unfathomable depth, is the source of all matter." This addition of 'as if' is very priceless. This is the characteristic of the profound sensitivity of Lao Tzu's consciousness. This very sensitive statement has not been made just like that. It has not been made in the heat of an argument or with the desire to prove something or convince someone. It is something that comes right from within him, something he has experienced.

Lao Tzu has explained this somewhere. His disciples have collected many of his statements. Chuang-Tse says that Lao Tzu has said that the greater the sage, the more hesitant he is. An ignorant person makes any statement without hesitating for he is blissfully unaware of the enormity of the words he utters. When thus he says, such-and-such an act is a virtue and such-and-such an act is a sin, he puts himself above God. Which is a virtuous act and which sinful? It is difficult to say and therefore unlawful. Therefore he who knows, will still hesitate and will try to avoid making a statement.

Jesus has said, "Judge ye not, that ye should not be judged." Things are very complicated and mysterious. What is virtue, what is sin? Virtue becomes a sin and sin becomes a virtue. That which starts as a sin, bears flowers of virtue, what begins as a virtue, lands up in sin. Here it is light now but very soon darkness descends and the darkness that was now will soon change into light. Now it was morning and it has turned into evening and that which was beautiful has turned grotesque. What is beautiful?

Nasruddin's wife asks him one day, "I feel your love has become less since a few days. Will you love me when I am old?" Nasruddin replied, "I shall worship you. I shall smear my head with the dust of your feet. But wait! you will not look like your mother will you? If so, I beg of you, remain as you are!"

What will we call beauty, what will we call youth? Each step of youth leads to old age. Every wave of beauty rises up and turns ugly in a short time. Here things are mysterious, united; they are not divided. The Universe is misty, it is twilight here – you cannot say it is light, you cannot say it is dark.

Lao Tzu says, "The sage hesitates", and Lao Tzu's each statement is full of hesitation. If an ignorant man reads him, he will say, "Perhaps Lao Tzu did not know or else why should he say, 'as if'? If you know say so, if you do not know even then, say so. One should talk clearly. If you do not know, say 'I do not know'; if you know then say what you know. Where is the sense in saying 'as if'. This shows his rank ignorance" – thus an ignorant man argues.

In fact, an ignorant person cannot conceive the mystery of things. They find it easier to go by fixed concepts. Let it be said that a man is sinful – that is enough for him. But the sinful man can perform an act of virtue. Another man is called virtuous – but he is also prone to sin. Then what does this mean? What difference can your labelling make when a sinner can perform a deed of virtue and a pious man can sin? Then your labels become dangerous. Then why attach these labels? But we categorize and become free from anxiety by putting each man in his place. This does not help to change matters in the least. Life proceeds as it is going to.

Lao Tzu is very hesitating and there have been very few people in the world who have been as hesitating as Lao Tzu. In India we find this hesitation in Buddha. But Buddha's hesitation was not as much as Lao Tzu's for Buddha had left it be known that he would not answer certain questions. This is also a certified answer; for Buddha has answered by saying he will not answer. Not to answer is definite on the part of Buddha, so there is nothing indefinite about these questions.

Lao Tzu says 'as if' – it is hypothetical, imagine, repeat within yourself and it may come within your understanding that all this is born out of the empty Void. All this has come into being through Void, but to express it thus definitely, is to trespass it. For then the Void is small enough for me to look into it and see that all things have come out of it. Then the Emptiness does not remain boundless – it is no longer fathomless, no longer deep. It has become small enough to be placed on the research table and analysed. Then the mystery is lost.

Lao Tzu says, "Suppose, as if it alone is the mother."

If Lao Tzu is questioned "Does God exist?" He will never answer in yes or no. People like Lao Tzu live so close to God that they cannot answer in yes or no.

There is a case filed against Nasruddin in the court. The magistrate tells him "Nasruddin, you are a great word-twister. You give such a turn to your words that we find it difficult to cope up with you. Therefore, you are hereby ordered to answer in either yes or no."

Nasruddin replied, "But the answer that is worth giving, cannot be given in yes or no. Only the answer which is not worth giving can be given in yes or no. So I beg you to take back the oath you gave me to tell the truth and nothing but the truth. Then I shall answer you freely in yes and no. You

have made me take an oath to tell the truth and truth is not a thing that can be replied by yes or no." "Alright", said the magistrate. "Give me an example to prove that you cannot answer in yes or no."

Nasruddin asked, "Can I ask you my lord if you have stopped beating your wife? Please answer in yes or no." The magistrate found himself in difficulty. If he said yes, it would mean he has been beating his wife. If he says no, that would mean he still beats his wife. Nasruddin again asked, "What is your answer? Now will you relieve me of my oath? Then I shall answer as you wish but remember, there are many things that cannot be answered by a yes or a no."

And where the question pertains to God, yes and no become absolutely useless. There the atheist as well as the Theist proves himself to be a fool. He who answers in yes or no, proves his stupidity. Here things become very fluid and merge into each other. Therefore, Lao Tzu says very hesitatingly, "It seems as if everything is born out of this void."

Enough for today – rest, tomorrow.

CHAPTER 13

Death of the ego and the entrance into the mystery

23 July 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 4: SUTRA 2

WE SHOULD BLUNT ITS SHARP POINTS, AND UNRAVEL ITS COMPLICATIONS. WE SHOULD ATTEMPER ITS BRIGHTNESS AND SUBMERGE ITS TURMOIL. YET DARK LIKE DEEP WATER IT SEEMS TO REMAIN.

Religion is the state of an empty consciousness; like the state of an empty vessel.

But how is one to become an empty vessel? If one wishes to be empty, how can one be? If one wishes to annihilate himself, what is the method?

Yesterday we tried to understand that nothing is more foolish than trying to be perfect. But the science of becoming perfect is available. We have shastras that explain this process step by step. We have schools and universities where we can perfect ourselves in any direction. But where is the scripture that teaches void? What are the precepts that teach emptiness? One has got to pass through a particular process in order to be something. So man has developed many methods of reaching perfection. He has laid out paths for strengthening his ego. He has organised and classified his thoughts and concepts in this direction. But for emptiness? What is one to do to become empty?

Lao Tzu has a few things to say on this. He says: ”Blunt the sharp edges.” There are many sharp edges in the personality of an individual. Where you pierce and pain another, there is a sharp point within you. But it is always the sharp point of the other that we become aware of when it pricks us.

When we prick another, we are not aware of it within ourselves. If I pierce you with a sharp knife, you will become aware of its sharpness, not I. If someone pierces me, then alone will I become aware – but then too, only of the others' sharpness.

This causes a lot of confusion in the world. All the strife in the world is due to the fact that we are sensitive towards the sharp points of others and not to our own. Have you ever felt the sharp points within yourself? This is why we are busy wiping off the sharpness of others throughout our lives.

So the first thing to keep in mind is that we are not conscious of the sharp edges within ourselves. We are not conscious of the fact that these sharp edges pain others. We are only aware of the pain inflicted by the sharp edge of another, for it pains us. Another thing, since we are unaware of the sharp edges within us, knowingly or unknowingly, we keep on strengthening their roots. Since we are aware of the sharp edges of others, we are always endeavouring – to destroy them.

In this connection, the most interesting thing is, the more we strive to blunt the edges of the other, the stronger we have to make our own edges; for there is no other way of breaking the opponent's edge. So the effort to blunt the edges of the other is an intrinsic effort to sharpen, to increase and to polish our own edges! And we are all engaged in this pursuit with the result that a vicious circle is created. Each one of us is engaged in sharpening and poisoning his own edges to counteract the others'.

Then it gradually happens that we remain nothing but a bundle of pins and needles.

Now we should also understand the way in which our sharp edges prick us also: When our sharp edges begin to inflict wounds on others, they all become eager to inflict wounds on us in return. This is how we realise our own pricks. So then, we at the most hide our sharp edges by drawing a cover on them. But these covers are skin-deep only. We cover ourselves with the plaster of sweetness, humility, of refinement and gentility. But the slightest attack and this layer comes off laying bare the sharp edges within.

Lao Tzu says: "Brush off all the sharp edges." Then what are we to do?

First we shall have to know the locations of these sharp points. Could it not be that through the long live of births, we have remained a mere collection of sharp points? We seem to have shed all the other part of us and saved only these! And how are we to know our own edges? Step into the place of 'the other' and you shall know.

Whenever the other person is pained by us, our mind says that he suffers from his own mistakes. Whenever we are hurt by another, we say the other has hurt us. If you are angry with me I say you have a notable temperament. If I become angry I say, "The conditions were such, I had to be angry." About the other, I say, "He is an ill-natured person, the situation was not such that he should have lost his temper. He is venomous!" Such reasoning helps to hide all our sharp edges and we never become aware of them.

Jesus has said, "Do unto others what you would have others do unto you." But this is a far cry. At least let us have the magnanimity to use the same logic for others that we use for ourselves! When I lose my temper I say the situation was such. When the other loses his temper let me also

concede that the situation was such! We shall have to break this double-faced logic of ours. This double crossing logic – one for ourselves and quite another for the other is utilised mainly to save our prongs. And thus we never come to know who and what we are. This one logic spoils our whole life.

Therefore, the gist of all religions is contained in this statement of Jesus. "Do unto others as you would like others to do unto you. This is the essence of all religions. And this one statement is enough. All Vedas and Shastras and Puranas, and all Bibles and Korans are contained in this small statement.

Let a person do this much and he has no need to do anything else. But this is very difficult for we shall have to brush all the sharp edges within us – and sharp edges there are within us.

So the first thing is to become totally aware of this double-edged logic. Each moment I should be conscious of the fact that I must allow the same logic for others that I allow for myself. Then you will begin to see the thorns within you. The day we give up this logic and give the same allowances to others, conditions change and we witness a unique experience. Then we find that my nature was such that I got angry and the situation was such that the other had to get angry!

The day you realise that it is in your nature to get angry, that it is your habit to lose your temper and the conditions of the other were such that he could not but lose his temper, then you will be incapable of forgiving yourself and not forgiving the other. He who finds it very easy to forgive himself, is never able to brush away the thorns off himself.

We however, are experts – at forgiving ourselves. There is no limit to our forgiving ourselves. How long would it be possible, I ask you for you, to stay with a person, exactly like you? It will be difficult to spend a single day; but you live with your self from many births! There must be some logic that saves you from knowing yourself. You can not think what you are! You have not the least bit of consciousness to show you what you are!

To understand this, we must first have the knowledge of the pikes, of the daggers that jut out from us. Wherever we go, we are bound to hurt someone or the other. If you manage to pass without any incident, you do not feel you have really done something. You feel you passed and no one noticed you! You can only draw another's attention towards yourself when you begin to inflict injury.

There are many kinds of wounds you can inflict, of that we shall talk later, in how many ways we can hurt and how well we can explain it away!

Some friends had gathered one morning in Nasruddin's sitting-room. He called one of his disciples and handing him an earthen vessel said, "Take this to the well and fill it. Mind you, do not break it! It is an earthen pot. Now come near me." As the youth came near him, he gave him two slaps on his face. The poor boy was dazed and the rest of the gathering were very much perturbed. One old man then said, "Mulla, you hit the youth who has committed no fault. We cannot understand this. The vessel is yet unbroken and you have punished the boy?" Nasruddin said, "I am not from those foolish ones who wait for the happening and then mete out the punishment. What is the use then? When the pot is already broken, then where is the sense in beating?"

You will not be able to answer Nasruddin. His words are meaningful. If you beat, you must then beat first, then it has some meaning. Later on it will have no meaning. Man is such an expert – he can deal out the punishment before the error is committed. This is the message of Nasruddin's story. We are experts at rationalization.

But no self-experiences are experienced by means of the skill of rationalisation for the order of reasoning is useful only to hide the ego-self. Rationalisation will not do, what is needed is self-introspection. Self-introspection means the ability to put oneself in the other's place. Each one of us feels that the other's anger was unjustified. It is difficult to find a man who does not feel that he is the victim of injustice. A thousand times in the day we feel victimized for no fault of our own.

Our experience is that we are prey to injustice. But when we have spent our wrath on the other, have we ever felt that the other is a prey to injustice? As the other is ignorant of the unfairness on his part, so are we.

This is insight, this is not logic. This is an experience. Man's nature is the same everywhere. Everyone thinks almost the way I think; everyone's experiences are almost like mine. Therefore it is not difficult to put oneself in the other's position and think. He who is successful in putting himself in the other's place or putting the other in his place, develops his insight. Then he is able to see the sharp edges within him.

Mahavira attained supreme knowledge; so also Buddha. And yet every morning when Buddha prayed he asked forgiveness of the whole world. One day a person asked him, "You have attained the supreme knowledge, now no one is hurt by you, no one can be hurt by you, then why do you ask forgiveness?" Buddha said, "I remember my days of ignorance, when I used to feel injured even when no one was injuring me. Therefore even though I do not willfully harm others, many must be feeling injured because of me, so I know that this vast ocean of ignorant humanity that is all around me must be feeling injured on account of me even though I am not inflicting the injury. They are being inflicted, whether I am the cause or not. Hence I have to ask forgiveness."

"But you have not caused the infliction?" the man asked again. Buddha replied, "But I am the cause. If I were not, no injury will be on account of me. My being is enough to inflict the injury. Therefore I ask forgiveness. This forgiveness is not for a sin committed but for a sin that has taken place – even though I have had no hand in it."

We are in such a state where we feel the whole world is molesting us. We feel we are innocent and the rest of the world is filled with wickedness – that a great conspiracy is going on against us; that you are alone, against the whole wide world! This is our view-point. And with such a view-point, you can never see the spikes within you. So you will always be defending yourself and he who tries always to save himself, will never know himself. Hence he can never save himself for how can he save himself when he does not know himself?

So the first thing is – watch yourself. How many injuries you inflict during the day – in the speech, as you sit, as you walk, with your gestures, with your smiles and with your eyes or your lips! note the wounds you inflict – sometime even without any reason. Then you will come to realize that that is your nature.

Mulla Nasruddin was walking along a road. One man slipped over a banana peel and fell. Nasruddin laughed out loud. As he was laughing, his foot fell on another bit of the banana peel and he too fell. As he got up from the ground he folded his hands and said, "I thank thee, oh Lord! Had I not laughed beforehand, I would never have laughed at all!" Now it was the other's turn to laugh.

When we laugh at others, we do not think; when we abuse others or scandalize them, we do not think what we are doing. It is possible that in no time we may find ourselves in the same situation. Nasruddin speaks from the very depth of the human being. He says, "It is as well that I had my laugh for later the tables were turned!" Nasruddin is a symbol of the irony of all mankind. He is, so to say the essence, the very extract of all human psychology.

We shall have to inspect each movement of ours, lest it hides a sharp edge within itself. Are you piercing someone and are you by any chance, taking pleasure out of it? You are perhaps dominating over someone, asserting your ownership over someone, giving orders to others – and taking delight in it!

One day Nasruddin was annoyed with his son. The son is making a lot of noise. He orders him, "Sit down you rascal!" But he, after all, is Nasruddin's son! He says, "I won't!" "Then stand!" shouted Nasruddin. "Whether you sit or stand, you shall have to obey me," he tells his son!

It is the persistent effort of our mind to dominate someone. Why? It is because when we do so, we feel we too, are something. We are hardly aware of our being unless we oppress someone. The greater the number of people within my clutch, the greater a person I become. We have no other measure to measure the greatness of a person. How many will suffer if he tightens his fist? That great is the man!

We are engaged in pressing down as many necks as we can. And it is not that the enemy alone puts his hands on your neck; those whom we call friends, they too have got their thumbs on our necks. And the enemy's hold may loosen sometime – not so the friend's! Those who are related to us, they too, are always testing and surveying their hold on you. The moment they feel their hold slackening they are filled with fear of losing their grip!

All these are our spikes. These are our violences. Lao Tzu says, "Blunt their sharp edges." If you wish to progress towards the void, you shall have to destroy these edges, drop them, cast them aside. But who can do this? Only that person who is willing to live in insecurity. We keep an armed guard at our door because we want protection. The armed guard shows in the subtle ways that we put up defences all around our individuality.

I lived with a friend for eight years. This man was a good soul. Whenever he met me he was very loving towards me. He would always smile when he greeted me. But I never saw him smiling either at his wife or his son or his servants. When his servants were around, he was a different man altogether – he behaved as if there was no one in the room. I was perplexed and so I asked him what was the reason?

He said, "I have to be alert. If I smile at the servant, he comes with a plea to raise his pay. If I smile at my wife, she puts in a demand for yet another saree and if I smile at my son, he promptly puts his hand in my pocket! So I wear this mask of severity for my protection. It is a necessary compulsion and though it is difficult to maintain, it keeps the son away and also the servants are afraid."

”But what will you gain or lose by this defence?” I asked him. ”Have you pondered on this! If you die today, the servants will enter your room no more. Your wife will no longer ask for sarees and your son will not feel your pockets. They will go and throw your body out of the house. As long as you are alive, insecurity is there. The moment you are dead, you shall be secure. There is no better secured thing in this world than a corpse. Even death can do nothing to a dead man; no illness can trouble him. Nothing can be done to it – it is beyond all that you can do.”

The more protected we are, the more spikes we require. These spikes are our security arrangements. We are afraid, we feel besieged by foes on all sides and we feel we must protect ourselves against them.

Nasruddin began to drink heavily in order to escape his wife. His friends began to worry about him. They were afraid he might die. Whenever they pleaded with him he said, ”I can only go home when I am drunk. My legs begin to tremble if I am sober and my mind is in a whirl preparing answers for questions that no one has ever asked but my wife would. When I am drunk I enter with never a care. This is my defence.”

When things began to go out of hand, the friends thought they would have to do something or else he would die. So they decided that one of them would dress as a devil and sit on the tree and pounce on Nasruddin. He was bound to be frightened and would do anything the devil told him.

So one night one of the friends dressed as a devil and lay in wait for Nasruddin. The rest hid behind the tree. When it struck two, Nasruddin came reeling on his way back home. Suddenly there were shouts and yells as the devil jumped on Nasruddin and catching him by the neck said, ”Promise you shall drink no more or I’ll wring your neck!” Nasruddin looked at him and said calmly, ”First tell me gentleman, who are you?” Now this caused confusion for such an eventuality had not been taken into consideration. The man however replied, ”I am the devil! Can’t you see?” ”Oh, then I am most happy to meet you!” said Nasruddin ”I am the guy who has married your sister. Come along, I shall take you to her!”

All plans were failed. The friends came out from behind the tree. Nasruddin addressed them thus: ”With great difficulty I have come upon my wife’s brother. I want to take him to her but he is running away! He has not the guts to face her.”

All our arrangements our words, our language, our precepts, our wines and picture-houses, our brothers and entertainments are intrinsic arrangements for our protection. Our mosques and temples, our gurudwaras and churches are all preparations for our security. We have made all these arrangements out of fear. When a person is afraid, he has to keep all kinds of spikes around him. Then who would break these spikes?

He alone can break these spikes, who is prepared to live in insecurity.

Alan Watt has written a book called ’WISDOM OF INSECURITY’ after understanding the Lao-Tzu trend of thought: Security is a foolish thing. We cannot make anything secure. We destroy ourselves in the effort to do so. One should have the wisdom to live in insecurity. We shall create no spikes, we shall prepare no defences and then if life attacks, we shall welcome it. The most wonderful thing that happens is, that when thus a man volunteers to accept all attacks and makes no arrangements

to counteract them, when he believes that that is his destiny, then all attacks become impossible on such a person.

Aggression has its own rules.

If your neighbour sees you doing pull-ups, he will be frightened. Then he expects all kinds of things from you. So he too begins to do exercise. Then you look through your window and you suspect foul play. So you pick up a sword and so it goes on! And this is not between neighbours alone. This happens between Russia and America and China and India and Pakistan. One country begins to spread its army on the borders and the neighbouring country kicks up an alarm. It sends a bigger force to guard its borders. Then each begins to suspect the other, leading to minor frays and major wars.

Psychologists say that 99

Our minds revolve round this one fact – what is the other doing? Then we begin to do the same thing with double force. And the intellect on both sides is of the same quality. In this retaliation, the reflections and images that result become so powerful that man has no control over them. Then everything seems to happen mechanically.

Lao Tzu says, ”Be insecure!” As it is how can you be secure? If this earth breaks today, where goes all your security? If the sun turns cold, what arrangements have you made to guard against this possibility? And if the sun recedes farther away from the earth, how will you bring it back? Once this earth was barren of all creation. What if it were to become barren again? To whom will you complain? Life has existed and become extinct on infinite planets. This earth too will not always remain so green. It will be destroyed. What measures have you against all this?

It is just like an ant that is returning home with a grain of sugar. Your foot falls on her and she is crushed to death. You are not even aware of it! All her plans, all her arrangements, snapped in a moment! God knows what all she must have dreamt about, what all she must have planned to do on returning home! Everything is destroyed. Now how can the ant get out from under your foot? Can she make any prearrangements?

You think no end of your abilities – just because you have crushed an ant? What is the status of man in this enormous universe?

If a great sun passes by us, we shall be reduced to ashes. Scientists say that three thousand million years ago, a big sun passed by the earth – that is at a distance of a thousand million miles – and in this very impact that part of the earth which we now know as the moon, broke away from the earth. The Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean are the hollows where the moon formed a part of the earth. In this enormous and infinite universe where there are some four thousand million suns anything is possible anytime. And no one is going to come and consult you! A slight difference and life will fade forever on this earth.

Crores of species or animals have inhabited this earth but not a single descendant of theirs exists now. And there is no special rule of life regarding the human being. We, however, make elaborate arrangements. But all our arrangements are like those of the ant. I do not say make no

arrangements, nor does Lao Tzu say make no arrangements. I do not say do not store a little grain for the rainy weather. I only say: while doing this, remember well these are all arrangements like those of the ant. The gigantic wheel of life moves on its own principles and we have no control over it. If this comes within our understanding, then all anxieties of security fall off.

Security should continue but the anxiety thereof; the madness thereof, should be no more. Then there is no difficulty in dropping the spikes for the spikes are for our protection. Now there is no need to save ourselves. We are ready to accept whatever comes. If death comes, it is welcome. In this acceptance you do not feel the need of anger or violence or hate or enmity or jealousy or malice any more.

Then only can the spikes break.

Lao Tzu says, "This our mind, our individuality has become a ganglion." It has become a complex – like tangled thread. From wherever you pull, it gets more entangled. You try to disentangle in one place and it gets entangled in another place. No matter how much you try, you cannot disentangle the knots. And Lao Tzu says – "Disentangle these knots". How shall we go about it?

We are forever trying to disentangle these knots. A man comes and says, "I do not want to be angry. Please show me how I may not be angry" It is very strange! You do not want to be angry, where is the question of being angry? Do not be angry – that is all! He says, "That is not the question. I do not want to be angry, but I become angry." This means, anger is a thread, entangled with many other like threads. This man wants to be rid of this thread but he is catching hold of some other thread. For example, tell this man, "Alright! If you do not want to be angry, take delight in insults. Do not worry about honour and respect." He will at once turn round and say, "How can that be? After all, one should have self-respect!"

Man is very cunning. He says, "I am not arrogant, I believe in self-respect. Others indulge in arrogance; and self-respect one should have. One cannot become a worm!" He says, "I do not want to be angry but I want to keep my pride." Now pride is a thread that is joined to anger and it cannot be segregated. Self-respect is a far cry; he who tries to save even his self, will find that anger is well within him. It is not enough to be selfless for yet the self remains. Only in the condition of selflessness where the self is completely absent, then only does anger fall off.

Our condition is such that we want to preserve one end of the stick and cut of the other. And life passes in great difficulty, nothing is eradicated for we never seem to see that everything is conjoined and entangled with everything else within us.

One man says, "I shall make no enemies. I wish to be friendly with all." But remember by making friends you give rise to the enemy. One can understand the correlation of anger and arrogance but how enmity is born in friendship, is difficult to understand He who is eager to make friends, is bound to make enemies.

There is a reason for this. One method of making friends, brings about the by-product of enmity. Just as on burning coal, ash is bound to remain for it is the by-product; so when you make friends with someone, you lay the foundation of enmity with that person also. A man eager to cultivate friendship creates many out-posts of enmity all around him.

In fact, what is the reason behind your desire for friendship? If we seek deep within, we shall find that it is because we are afraid of enmity and this is a precaution we take against it.

Nasruddin is in trouble. He has incurred a great loss in his business. His friend offered to help. "Take these Rs.10,000. It will help you to tide over your difficulty," he told him. Nasruddin closed his eyes and began to ponder. "Where is the need to ponder?" his friend said, "Return the money when you can." Nasruddin was still quiet. The friend was surprised at his behaviour. "What is the matter?" He asked, "You are in such great trouble. Why don't you accept?" "No," said Nasruddin. "I have taken loans and lost friends. You are the only one left. I do not want to lose you also. You are a good friend and I do not want to lose you for Rs.10,000."

Friend and foe are the two extremities of the same thing. The friend turns into a foe any time and the enemy can become a friend any time. I have said before that Machiavelli is the other end of Lao Tzu. There is great intelligence in both of them. Machiavelli has said, "Never tell a friend what you would never like to tell a foe, for a friend can turn a foe any time. And never say things against an enemy, which you would never say against your friend for an enemy can turn a friend any time."

Machiavelli has said a clever thing. Be alert when you talk. Do not tell a friend what you dread to tell a foe for who knows when the friend might turn into a foe? And then it would be difficult. Also, never say things about the enemy which you would not say about a friend, for that too may turn out to be a bad bargain. The enemy can become a friend any time. We wish that we should have many friends and no enemies. It is an onerous involvement.

Lao Tzu says, "Extricate the knots." But how? When we try to unravel one end, the other end becomes more complicated. We are taught – Eschew anger, learn to forgive. This causes problems. We are told – Do not hate, love all. Commit no violence, be non-violent; tell no falsehood, be truthful. But all these cause more entanglements. If a man resolves to tell the truth, why should the knots become more entangled? But they do.

The moment a man resolves to speak the truth, the confusion begins. For one thing, he shall always have to be aware of falsehood. He shall always have to keep in mind what falsehood is and be every moment aware of it. The moment his thoughts go away from falsehood it will be difficult to hold truth. Children lie naturally for they have no idea of falsehood. They are so simple that as yet there is no distinction between truth and falsehood.

I have heard that a little boy once went to his mother and said, "Mother, today I saw a dog as big as an elephant!" His mother said, "A thousand times I have told you son, do not exaggerate but you do not listen to me." Now the child is not telling an untruth. Why? Because the child's sense of proportion is very different and this we are not aware of. A dog that appears small to you can appear as huge as an elephant to him. His mathematics are different. What the child sees, we do not see and what we see, the child does not see.

Tell a child to draw a man. He will leave out the torso completely. He will draw two arms, two legs, and a head but the trunk of the body will be left out completely. And this is done by children all over the world!

Psychologists became very curious and they tested children from all over the world. Whether the child was from America or from China, it invariably drew the picture of a man without a trunk. Why

does the child leave off the middle portion? It is because the child is oblivious of this part of the body. For a child the human structure consists of a head, two arms and two legs. He is not aware of the mid-portion; he is as yet unconscious of it.

So a child can see a dog as big as an elephant. But the mother says, "I told you a thousand times!" Now this is pure exaggeration while the child's exaggeration is not!

The mother however, rebukes the child and tells him to go and ask forgiveness from God and vow that he would never lie again. The child goes, prays to God and comes back. The mother asks, "Did God forgive you?" "Well, of course!" Says the child, "He even told me! Never mind little one, I too had felt the dog to be an elephant when first I saw him! It is not your fault at all. Look again and he will now look like a dog".

Now this child is not telling a lie. We may think this is a downright lie. Which God ever speaks like this? But we are not conversant with the child's mind. The child can raise the question on one hand and provide the answer on the other. He must have spoken thus to God. "Do you know what I saw?" And he must have supplied the answer himself as coming from God. "I too felt the dog to be an elephant when I saw him for the first time. It happens this way for the first time. I did not know whether it was a dog or an elephant!" The child has not uttered a falsehood at all for he is as yet blissfully ignorant of it. He is also not telling the truth for he is not aware of the existence of truth! He speaks what he feels.

If we understand correctly – To speak the truth is to speak of a thing as it happens. But this is not the brand of our truth in which we are conscious of falsehood also. The child speaks what he feels. He sees a dog to be an elephant – he says so. He has not made this up at all! He hears God saying it happened the same way with Him – he recounts the happening faithfully. Truth has another completely different dimension. Truth is, where there is neither truth nor falsehood; where things are as they are.

There is no sense of falsehood there. Therefore many a time, people who live within truth and falsehood feel certain things to be false. As for instance – a dog appearing like an elephant! That is a downright falsehood! How can that be? This is our explanation of falsehood and it conveys the state of our mind. It tells us nothing about the working of a child's mind.

Actually, when we point out the difference to a child for the first time, we initiate him into falsehood.

A new priest came to Nasruddin's village. He gave his first discourse in the Masjid. As they were leaving for home, he came up to Nasruddin and giving credence to his old age asked him his opinion about his discourse. The Mulla said, "Wonderful! We never knew what sin is before you came!" Does sin need an explanation for it to be known as sin?

It is said that Nasruddin accosted his lawyer outside the court and asked him, "What are the rules of divorce?" "What do you mean? What has happened?" The lawyer asked. "My wife has no manners. Her table manners especially are atrocious! The whole town is talking and my dignity is at stake. I must divorce her!" "How long ago were you married?" the lawyer asked. "About 30 years ago," said Nasruddin. "If you have borne with her for the last 30 years, what troubles you now?" asked the lawyer.

Nasruddin replied, "All these years I did not know. It was only today that I was reading a book on etiquette. It was then I realised that I was doomed! My wife has no table-manners at all!"

When do we become aware of things? When there are expositions on them. Lao Tzu says, "An inch of a distinction, and heaven and hell fall apart." If we bring in the distance of even an inch in our thoughts, it causes a difference of heaven and hell. Lao Tzu says, "Make no distinction." Say not that this is right and that is wrong for the moment you differentiate everything is destroyed. Live in non-distinction.

How will these knots disentangle?

Ordinarily, what we do is we set about disentangling each knot, one by one. Then what we do is, we bring in its opposite to counteract it. For instance, if there is too much anger within us, we bring in a big dose of forgiveness. If we are violent by nature, we switch over to non-violence in a big way. If we are greedy, we become charitable. But nothing is solved this way.

According to Lao Tzu, to disentangle means to view the conditions as they stand. All this confusion is the cause of your differentiations. Your distinction between virtue and sin, truth and untruth, love and hate, has given rise to all this confusion and entanglements. Leave all distinctions and live in plain simplicity. Live naturally as you are, flow with your nature. Make no distinctions. Then there are no entanglements – no knots.

If someone asked Lao Tzu whether he had ever made any atonements for his sins, he would say, "No, for I know not what sin is." He does not say he never committed a sin. He simply does not know what is sin! If someone asked, "Have you performed any good deeds, for then, you are bound to be rewarded?" He would reply, "I have no idea, for I know not what a virtuous act is. I have never weighed my actions. I have never calculated. Whatever came out of me naturally, I did. I have never even repented for my action nor praised myself for them. These two things I have never done."

The knots will disentangle, if we know the alchemy of their formation. What is the alchemy? We tend to break everything into two. At the very outset, we break the thing and then we proceed to act. Then we find ourselves in the same predicament as Zeno.

There was a very famous thinker of Greece called Zeno. He was one of the very few top-most thinkers of Greece. His paradoxes are many. He says, "There is a distance of one mile. You divide it into two and first travel the first half-mile. Then you divide the other half into half and then this again into half. This way you keep dividing into halves and you find you will never be able to complete the mile." Now one mile is no great distance. You can cross it in no time. Now Zeno says you cross the first half because the mind divides all things into two. Then divide again the next half, then again divide the remainder and thus you goon dividing and ultimately you find that you are unable to cross this short distance till eternity.

According to the mathematician, this is absolutely correct. This distance cannot be crossed till infinity.

Zeno says that you pull an arrow across the bow string. Now say the arrow left the bow at 12 o'clock. So the arrow is at a place, say A, at 12 o'clock. Where will it be at one minute past 12? It should be

at B. Then at 2 minutes past 12, it should be at C. Then only can the arrow move. But Zeno says, at 12 o'clock the arrow is stationary at A. At one past 12, it is stationary at B. Since it is stationary at these two points, how will it cross the distance from A to B? Zeno says, "According to mathematics, the arrow has travelled no distance. It is stationary."

Zeno walks, he uses the bow and arrow. When people ask him how then he walks and uses the bow and arrow, he says, "I do not know." But according to mathematics, the arrow does not travel. For in order to travel it has to be first fixed at one place. Now when the arrow is at A, it cannot be at B and as long as it is stationary at A, how can it reach B? Now if we say it is at A and B at the same time, this will cause confusion."

It is now 2000 years since Zeno wrote his paradoxes. Many attempts were made to find answers to his paradoxes. Many tried to answer but could not answer. There were no answers, for the mind breaks everything into two before working on it. Now the arrow does not break things. In fact it is not even aware when it was at A and when it was at B – or where are A and B? The intellect breaks things into two; the feet walk on without any break. The feet never stop to measure; now this is half mile, now it is again half of half mile! There is no synchronization between the mind and the feet. The rule of the intellect is to break; and the result of breaking is confusion. If you want to save yourself from entanglements, then go back, do not break. If you do not want to break, discard the intellect. When the intellect is dropped, non-distinction arises. Then all the knots are unknotted; all the ganglions are destroyed.

One of the names of Mahavira is 'Nigrantha'. It means that person whose knots are eradicated, whose entanglements have fallen.

Remember, the stress is on the extinction of entanglements and not on the unravelling thereof. I have a bunch of jumbled threads. How to disentangle them would mean, I shall draw each thread out one by one and wind them separately. Now the extinction of entanglements means that these threads should fall from my hands and I should forget the entanglement completely. I am rid of them, my hands are empty. The stress is on the annihilation of entanglements. Lao Tzu says "Eradicate all entanglements." Mahavira says, "Be sans-knots. Cast away the knots."

Nowadays psychologists have begun to work a great deal on complexes. In the East, the word 'GRANTHI' (knot) is a very old word. We refer to the entanglements of the mind as granthi. The West has begun to use the word complex for the same thing since the last fifty years. There are many complexes in the mind. The psychoanalysts are trying very hard to remove these complexes but fifty years' untiring work has brought them to one conclusion that no amount of psychoanalysis can bring about the eradication of these complexes. All that happiness is, that the patient ultimately becomes resigned to his trouble.

One man is full of anger. He is very anxious to be rid of it. He goes to a psychoanalyst where after a prolonged treatment, he will come to resign himself to anger. Now he says, "Since it does not leave me, I may as well accept it. I shall fight it no more." This is as far as you can reach if you try to disentangle yourself. The complex does not sort itself out. The mind itself is the complex. It is its nature to be entangled. It is not that the complexes are removed and the mind becomes clear. The mind itself is the complex.

The only remedy that people like Lao Tzu offer to be free of these complexes is to break down the foundation, the basis of this mind, which is distinction: the distinction of yours and mine, light and darkness, friend and foe, life and death, body and soul, heaven and earth. All these distinctions should be dropped.

Nasruddin was knocked down by a car. He was badly hurt. Almost all his bones were broken. He was taken to the hospital. The Sultan happened to pass by his village. He came to know that Nasruddin, who was very well-known, was in the hospital. He went to see him. When he saw him, the king did not know what to say and how to say it! Except for his face and eyes, the Mulla was completely bandaged. He had to say something however, so he said, "You are badly hurt Nasruddin. There is no part of your body that is intact. It must be really painful."

Nasruddin replied, "Not exactly, your majesty. It only pains when I laugh."

The Sultan could not understand. How can a man laugh under such conditions? He was at a loss, he dared not ask further. Yet he thought he might as well ask him since he had come. He said, "Tell me Nasruddin, can you laugh in such a condition?" Nasruddin replied, "If I cannot laugh in this condition then I have never learnt to laugh at all. What is the meaning of laughing? And what can be the occasion of laughing? And I laugh because many a time I felt, but I was not quite sure, that even if all the bones break, Nasruddin does not break. So I laugh to myself within and Oh! it is so enjoyable! Everything is broken. All who come, show their sympathy but I feel no pity for myself. There is no chance of recovery for all the bones are shattered. When people ask, 'How are you Nasruddin?' I say, 'Nasruddin is alright.'"

If you can see yourself alone and apart from the mind-complex, the complex falls immediately. Then you are absolutely alright. All the bandages will be where they are, all your knots will be entangled and the confusion will reign all round you but you suddenly find yourself outside of this. You transcend all this. Transcendence is disentanglement. The knots cannot be disentangled, they have to be transcended.

Darkness cannot be eradicated by staying in a valley. But you can climb the mountain and reach the sun. There is the bright sun. Darkness is in the valley only. But man chooses to be in the valley though he need not be.

All our endeavour is to light a lamp, light a fire and brighten the valley; but stay we must in the valley. We insist on staying where there is illness and try ways and means of eradicating illness. We never try to go beyond illness. The alchemy of Lao Tzu and the philosophy of such as him, is the philosophy of the Beyond. Be separate and free from everything. Remove yourself from where there is confusion and survey everything from a distance. You will laugh. Then nothing binds – no entanglements.

Lao Tzu says, "Remove the knots, disentangle them so that their glare is tempered." The pride that is within us, is like a flame; it burns. Its brightness hurts the eye. There is no splendour, there is fire within it. So Lao Tzu says, "Temper its brightness. Blunt your edges a little, disentangle the complex a little and you find your ego (AHANKAR) is ego no more. It has become 'ASMITA'.

It will be well to understand these two words ahankar and asmita. The sanskrit language is very rich in words. There is one word 'ahankara' which is equivalent to the word ego in English. Then there

is another word 'asmita', for which there is no equivalent in English. This word is difficult to translate even in Hindi. Ahankara means "I am such" and it deals a blow to the other. Asmita means, "I am such" but it hurts no one. It is so mild, it has no sharp edge. The very sound of the word ahankara is aggressive. The feeling in the tone of the word asmita, is like that of a storm that has abated; all waves are quiet. The lake still exists but the confusion and chaos of the storm and tempest is no more. These very waves that rose high above and tossed the boats in the storm, are now asleep – quiet and tranquil.

Asmita means that ego which has lost its sting. The flowers of which have plied down and only the lustre remains. What is this lustre? The light that spreads over the skies before the sun comes out is the lustre. Once the sun is out, the heat begins. The sun is as yet below the horizon but it is morn and the night is no more. It is the period between night and day. We call this period when the lustre prevails as the dawn. When the ego declines, the piercing flames of the 'I' disappear. The ego sinks and then what remains is the lustre of being.

The 'I' still exists but it is without the 'I-ness'. Then too, I am but then I just am, there is no storm of I-ness within. There is no noise of the ego within and yet if someone asks, I will say, "I am". But if no one asks, I shall not be aware of the fact that 'I am'. The 'I' that I utter will only be in response to someone's question. It is just a word I make use of; otherwise there is no 'I' formed within. You must have noticed however, that the ego always is, whether some one asks or does not ask. When you are alone, all by yourself, then too, it exists.

It has been told that once a ship sank in the sea. There was a rich businessman in it, who somehow happened to reach an uninhabited island. He was not only a businessman but also an expert sculptor and an architect. What could he do on this lovely island? He began to carve images, he built houses. He kept himself busy carving stones and cutting logs. Years passed and his township grew. He constructed all things that he normally required and was used to but which were meaningless here.

He made the shop from where he bought his stores. He constructed the hotel where he went and relaxed and had his meals. He made the station from where he used to catch the train. Every morning he went to the shop and wished the imaginary shop-keeper. Many a time he went to the hotel and relaxed. He had also built his church. He had made all arrangements as if he were in his own town.

After about twenty years, a ship happened to pass by his island. Those aboard knew this man and were surprised to find that he was still alive. They told him to go along with them. He requested them to come and see his township. He took them to the shop from where he pretended he bought his stores; then he took them to the hotel where he rested when he was tired. Then he pointed out the church where he went to pray. The visitors saw that there were two churches and asked him the reason for the second one.

"This is the church in which I did not go," he said. "There were two churches in my town. One I visited and the other I did not for it belonged to my enemies."

The visitors were surprised. "Why did you make the second church if you were not going to use it?" they asked. The man replied, "There was no fun in going to church without this second church. It

has to be in contrast to mine. Do you notice the wonderful condition of my church? And look at this other one! Nobody goes there. Why, it has never once been painted in all these twenty years!"

Ego, even when alone, will create a world for itself around it. It will even go to the extent of building the church where he does not go! Ego cannot be alone. It is 'other-oriented'. It has no identity without 'the other'. Asmita is alone. It has nothing to do with the other. It is my 'being' whereas ego is my battle against you. Asmita is my own existence; it has nothing to do with you. When the ego becomes strong, the asmita is buried underneath. When the ego fades away, asmita appears in all its splendour. There is fire in the ego for it is born with the intention of burning the other. Asmita is mild and gentle.

Lao Tzu says, "TEMPER THE BRIGHTNESS." Do something so that this sharp brightness within you, this violent, fierce and poisonous form of your being may get less and less and that it may become mild and quite. Let there be only lustre and flame, no light. Remember, fire and light are one and the same; but fire burns whereas light does not. Fire can bring death, light brings life. There is burning and speed in fire whereas there is mildness alone in light. It is so soft and slow that you cannot hear its foot-falls.

Lao Tzu says: "Let its restless waves submerge into water". This poisonous ego, this insane desire to be perfect, let its dangerous waves sink into the ocean. Let them sleep in your life.

Then Lao Tzu says,"YET DARK LIKE DEEP WATER IT SEEMS TO REMAIN." And even when this happens, everything is yet mysterious. Do not think you have solved the riddle, do not think you have got all the answers to existence.

This last line is very precious: "YET DARK LIKE DEEP WATERS IT SEEMS TO REMAIN."

Like fathomless water! The lesser the water, the brighter it appears to be. As the waters increase, it becomes blue and when it becomes fathomless, it becomes dark. In the right perspective, darkness is the symbol of the Mystery. Remember, the Mystery lies not in the light, it lies in darkness. In a way light is shallow. Darkness has abysmal depths. It is limitless. If the whole world is filled with light, the circumference of light is limited; whereas even if a small room is filled with darkness, the darkness is infinite. Understand this a little.

If the whole world is filled with light, even then it is limited. Light forms a boundary. A small room filled with darkness, makes the room limitless. A small darkness is also infinite and the biggest of light is limited.

Lao Tzu says, "When all this happens, it will yet remain dark like deep water." This existence is like the deep waters that are steeped in darkness, boundless and enveloped by Mystery. There is no beginning and no end to it. Only the Christian fakirs have given the symbol of darkness to God. There is a very ancient sect of Christians that existed long before Christ. They were called Essene and it is said that Jesus had taken his training from them.

These Essene fakirs say: "Oh Lord, thou art the Absolute Darkness!" Many symbols have been chosen for God by many people. The symbols with light are many. The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Koran all say that God is light. Then these Essene fakirs must be very wonderful people, who likened Him to Absolute Darkness!

The reason was only this, that darkness is infinite. No matter what dimensions light has, it is always limited. Another interesting factor is that light is transitory whereas darkness is eternal. Light can be put on and put off, darkness requires no effort on your part. It makes no difference whether you come or go; whether the lamp burns or the sun comes out. Darkness exists in its own place, untouched, inviolable, sacrosanct! Light can be defiled, darkness cannot, for it cannot be touched. Lao Tzu says: "Fathomless water, steeped in darkness, steeped in Mystery!"

Mystery means, that which we know and yet know that we do not know. Please bear this in mind. Mystery does not mean that which we do not know, for that which we do not know is ignorance. That which we know is knowledge. There is no mystery in knowledge and there is no mystery in ignorance. The ignorant says, "I do not know". There is no mystery in this; that he does not know, is clear. The learned man says, "I know." Again there is no mystery. It is clear that he knows. Rahasya (Mystery) means, 'I know that I do not know.' In one sense, I know but in some other sense, I cannot say that I know.

In a sense I feel that I have known, recognised. I have come very near and at the same time it feels that nearer I go, the farther I am from it. I put out my hand and feel I have grasped something but lo, the hand seems to be lost in that Something! I jump into the Ocean and feel I have attained the Ocean but when I look closely I find I am Lying in a nondescript corner of the Ocean. Infinite is the Ocean unknown, untouched – I shall never be able to attain it.

It is evident that the ignorant man does not know. It is also clear that the wise man knows. Thus there is a common element between the ignorant and the wise – the element of unambiguity. The mystic is different. He is unlike the ignorant as well as the wise. He says, "In some respects I know and in some respects I do not know." The knowledge has revealed my ignorance. As much asI came to know, I found as much yet remained to be known.

Lao Tzu says, "The day everything is solved, you will find nothing is solved." Everything is like the dark deep fathomless water, steeped in complete darkness!

Now those who are prone to contemplation find it difficult to accept this. What is their difficulty? To take so much trouble to become empty, to work so hard to remove the complexes and ultimately nothing concrete comes to hand, then all the effort is fruitless! They do not know that when something specific results, the effort is in vain. That which is achieved completely, totally, becomes useless, meaningless.

When you attain and find you have not attained; when you reach and find that the destination is as yet far away; when you delve deep and find you are still on the surface and when you are deep at the bottom of the valley and yet feel the journey is as yet to begin, then you reach that place which is never devoid of meaning, which is full of meaningfulness and which is an unending poem filled with eternal romance.

Religion is eternal romance. The closer we reach to the beloved, the more He is hidden. There are veils upon veils, and infinite doors that hide His beautiful face! And these gates that lead to Him are infinite. Therefore this journey is purposeful in infinite ways, where each step is filled with wonder and mystery. And each step of this journey can be looked upon as a destination and each step can be taken as a resting-place from where a new journey starts.

Therefore Lao Tzu says that when all this happens even then – this term 'even then' is very meaningful – even then it is not that the destination is reached. Some one may say "We have reached." Only shallow people say they have reached – those who do not reach. Existence is so deep, so unfathomable that no one can assert that he has attained it completely.

There is a story in the Upanishads that a father sent his five sons in search of Truth. They went. After years they returned. The father was on his death-bed. He asked them whether they had attained Truth. The first son says yes and begins to repeat the Vedas. The second one repeats the Upanishads, the third talks profoundly on Vedanta and the fourth resorts to the quintessence of all religions.

As the boys gave their answers, the father became sadder and sadder. By the time the fourth son replied, he lay down in bed again. The fifth son, however, remained quiet. The father thinking he did not answer because he feared his father was tired, got up from the bed again. "Do not think I am tired son. Please answer, I am waiting for your answer." The son still kept quiet. The father commanded him to speak. He did not, he even closed his eyes now.

The father then said, "I can now die in peace. At last one of my sons has known and is therefore silent."

Bodhidharma was preparing to return after working for ten years in China. He gathered his disciples and asked them, "Tell me what is the secret of religion? What is Mystery? What is the message of Buddha? What have I given you?" Bodhidharma wanted to test his disciples.

One disciple replies, "Liberation and the mundane world are one and the same. Everything is Advaita (undivided)." Bodhidharma tells him, "You have my skin." The disciple was shocked. He was talking of such deep knowledge and the Guru likes it to his skin!

The second disciple says, "It is difficult to say. It is inexpressible." The Guru says, "You have my bones." "Only the bones?" The disciple asks. "Yes," says Bodhidharma, "for you say it is inexpressible but you express it in words." The third disciple says, "It cannot be said it is undivided, nor can it be said it is inexpressible. Words do not work here. Silence alone is useful for it." The Guru says, "You have my marrow." Now what could be deeper than this?

Then he looked towards the fourth disciple. This disciple falls at his feet and places his head on it. The Guru picks him up and looks into his eyes – they are empty. There is not a single reflection, not the shadow of an image within them. They were empty like a cloudless sky. The Guru shook him and said, "Did you hear me or not? Have my words reached you or not?" The empty eyes remained void and the lips remained closed also. He once again fell on the Guru's feet. Again the Guru picks him up and tells him to speak. The disciple remained silent. Bodhidharma said, "I am with you. Now I take your leave." Thus saying, Bodhidharma left. He told this disciple, "I am with you."

The meaning of Mystery is, it cannot be said it is attained; it cannot be said it is known; and it cannot also be said that it is not known. It is both – neither known nor unknown. The Absolute, the All, is so vast that nothing can be said about it. That is why Lao Tzu says 'still'. Solve everything, know all the secrets, remove all complexes, eradicate all your illnesses, yet you will find that the Mystery of the universe remains unknown. On the contrary the Mystery deepens – as deep waters become dark!

Enough for today, Rest, tomorrow.

CHAPTER 14

Reflection of that – which was before god

24 July 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 4 : SUTRA 3

I DO NOT KNOW WHOSE SON IT IS, MAY BE AN IMAGE OF WHAT EXISTED BEFORE GOD.

On attaining the void, becoming empty like an empty vessel, when all the sharp points of the mind fall away and the complexes are strengthened, when man unveils himself fully and knows, even then, that which is ultimate, which is the basis of creation, the most intrinsic, remains unknown. It remains folded in Mystery.

In this last sutra Lao Tzu points towards Him and says, ”I DO NOT KNOW WHOSE SON IT IS.” This that remains unknown when all is known, this that remains unopened when all else is revealed, whose mystery cannot be solved by any knowledge, who is this? I DO NOT KNOW WHOSE SON HE IS. I do not know of whom he is born, from where he comes, from which root source he has arisen? Perhaps he is the image of that which was before God. This Void, this mystery, is perhaps the reflection of that which was before God.

Many things need to be understood in this sutra. The first thing is, Lao Tzu says ”I DO NOT KNOW.” Yesterday I talked about asmita and ahankara. As long as ahankara (ego) persists, knowledge cannot dawn. As long as ego persists, only ignorance can be. The mystics have looked upon ego and ahankara as synonymous. To be egocentric and to be ignorant are the same. They are the two names of the same condition.

When ego falls, when ignorance falls, the sense of asmita begins. Asmita and wisdom are one and the same, just as ego and ignorance are one and the same. When ego is within, ignorance is

without. When asmita is within, wisdom is without. Asmita is – just to-be-ness. Just to be, without any distinction, without any form – just being – pure existence!

When there is only asmita, wisdom shall be with it. Here when Lao Tzu says, "I DO NOT KNOW," this 'I' is an indicator of asmita. The ego is annihilated. Now there is no feeling of being the centre of the world or that the world is only for me or that only I should be. All these feelings are now extinct. Even then, I am, and in this I, all mystery is washed away. But even this 'I' does not know from where this Void comes! Ignorance has no knowledge of the source of this Void but even wisdom has not the least idea where from it comes. Neither ignorance nor wisdom can tell of the source of the river of Existence.

By saying, "I DO NOT KNOW", Lao Tzu is trying to convey the fact that even after knowing all, after knowing the Self in all respects, even now when all complexes are removed and there is no darkness but light and light everywhere, even then he does not know from where arises this Void that has revealed itself to him. He does not know where it comes from or what is its journey. This asmita filled with wisdom, it too has no knowledge of it.

The 'I' of Lao Tzu, is the 'I' of the sage and this 'I' too, does not know. The 'I' of the ignorant does not know anything but even the 'I' of the wise does not know anything. This distinction should be understood. Beyond this, it is impossible to go. One can only reach up to asmita. Where even asmita is lost and we go beyond, we become one with the Void. Then there is no way of standing apart and knowing the Void.

He who stands on the shore of the ocean is an ignorant man. He who jumps and is drowned in the ocean, is a wise man; but as yet, he is apart from the ocean. He who becomes one with the ocean, goes beyond knowledge. The ignorant man does not know because as yet he is standing on the shore, away from the ocean. The wise man is drowned in the ocean and yet he does not know because he is still not one with ocean. The state which is beyond wisdom, is the state of being one with the ocean. But then the knower is no more.

He who knows, is the most ignorant. The 'knower' is so much that the known does not exist. In asmita, the knower and the known are equal and even. The balance is absolutely equal. Even then, one thin line – that of knowing – separates the two. The state that follows this – whether we call it Supreme knowledge or supreme ignorance – is the state in which the knower does not exist – he becomes Void.

In ignorance, the knower is too much: in Supreme ignorance or Supreme knowledge, the knower is completely absent and in wisdom the knower and the known are even.

The plane from which Lao Tzu speaks and says he does not know, is the plane of knowledge where asmita still is. So Lao Tzu says, he does not know whose son it is. From where has come this Void? Perhaps, he says, it is a reflection of that which existed even before God!

Man's imagination has gone up to God. Man has no concept beyond God. God is the ultimate boundary of man's conception. The highest flight of imagination has taken man up to God, the Universal Spirit. And Lao Tzu says, "This seems to be the image of that which is beyond God."

Here Lao Tzu hints at one or two things:

The first thing is that the boundary of conception is not even the outermost boundary of Truth. The ultimate boundary of perception does not lead to even the first step of Truth. Philosophy goes up to Parmatman but as yet the ocean has not begun! Therefore Shankara – it will be easier to understand Lao Tzu through Shankara – has described God also as a part of maya (Illusion) and not Brahma (The Absolute). This is because the concept of the Universal Soul is the ultimate concept of the mind; and illusion goes as far as the mind goes. Maya (Illusion) means the expansion of the mind. So if man has discovered God, it is a discovery of his mind; and whatever the human mind discovers, will be bounded by illusion.

Shankara has made a very courageous statement by calling God a part of maya. Brahma is beyond maya, beyond Ishwara (God).

This is exactly what Lao Tzu says. He says, ”That which was before God and which was naturally before creation and was also before the creator.” But he does not say ”It is the very same.” He says, ”This is His very art.” Lao Tzu says, ”Take this to be its image.” He does not say, ”This is it,” for the mind cannot know it. AHANKARA (ego) will never know it nor also asmita. At the most asmita will know its reflection.

Reflection means: There is a tree on the bank of a river and its reflection falls in the river. Now there is a fish in the river. This fish can see the reflection of the tree in the water but cannot see the tree on the bank of the river. Now the fish can see the reflection of the birds that fly overhead or the moon rising in the sky and also the clouds floating over the moon. The mirror of the water causes these reflections and these reflections alone the fish can see.

The mind, a mind filled with asmita, can at the most be capable of seeing such reflections.

Therefore Lao Tzu does not say with certainty that ’This is this.’ He says, ”Perhaps it is the reflection of that which was before God.”

Actually all that a man can know – nay, all that can be known, is only the reflection, for Truth can only be known when we are one with Reality. The knower is not separate. When the fire-fly burns itself with the lamp, then only does he know the lamp. When the rock salt melts in the ocean, then only does it know the ocean but then it is no more! And then even if it wishes to tell someone, it cannot because it no longer exists! As long as we know, at the most, we shall know the most Supreme to be known – but as a reflection. It is incumbent on us then to add the word ’perhaps’ when we talk of reflections.

Here, a little probe into Mahavira will make it easier to understand Lao Tzu. No one has used the words ’perhaps’ as generously as Mahavira has done. Whatever Mahavira said, he prefixed ’perhaps’ to it. He always said, ”Perhaps...”. He never said, ”It is like this”. Therefore the thinking of Mahavira is called ’Perhaps-ism’ Whatever he said, he never said without perhaps. Even the most indisputable fact about which he was absolutely definite, he would not say without ’perhaps’. Why? If Mahavira knows for certain he should clearly state that ’this is such’. But Mahavira says, ”Whenever anyone makes an assertive statement it becomes an untruth”.

Mahavira says, ”At the most, the mind can say, ’It can be this’”. It is also possible that ’it cannot be this’. When we say, ”It is this,” we destroy the possibility of the rest of the possibilities of Truth. Our

assertion becomes full and hence blind. When we say, ”It can be this,” we leave open the possibility of its being otherwise also. Try to understand it in yet another way and ’perhaps-ism’ will become clearer to you:

You can see me. It could not have ever occurred to you that you have never seen me, nor is there any way to see me. You see my reflection only. My image is formed in your eye and the message of this image reaches your brain. What you see is this image that is formed in your eyes. This is the only way you see me. Without eyes you cannot see me. Eyes means the mechanism of forming reflections. What is outside is reflected in the eye and the mind sees this reflection.

In the same way, when you hear me, you do not hear what I say. The sound of my voice falls on your ears and it is caught by them and relayed to the mind. Here the ears are the reflectors. Similarly when I touch you, you do not know the touch as such. Your skin catches the sensation and then you feel the touch. There is always a screen between you and me.

Therefore Immanuel Kant, the great thinker of Germany has said, ”A thing-in-itself, is unknowable”. We only see their images. And if it is only the reflections we know, remember this includes our ability to form images also.

Therefore a man suffering from jaundice sees yellow everywhere. Colour-blind people are unable to see particular colours and there are many people who are colour-blind. One out of every ten, is blind to one colour or the other.

Bernard Shaw did not know till the age of sixty that he could not see yellow. He could not differentiate between green and yellow. On his 60th birthday, someone presented him a suit. He went to buy a tie to match the suit and he brought a yellow tie. When he brought it home, his secretary was shocked to see it. ”You should have brought a green tie to match your suit and not a yellow one”, she told him. ”Who says this is yellow? This is green!” he said. Then for the first time he knew, he could not differentiate between yellow and green.

So what we see depends mainly on our own ability to see.

Now a fish swimming in water, will see the moon’s reflection blue because the waters of the river are blue. It has no way of knowing also, that the moon is not blue.

Therefore Mahavira says, ”We should always say perhaps with whatever we know.” This shows that we are not claiming the whole knowledge of Truth but only its reflection. So we say, ”This is how I see it.” We do not say ”This is how it is.” What I see can be wrong also, can be different; something entirely opposite can be the Truth.

Lao Tzu says, ”This Void that is manifest, is perhaps the reflection of that which was even before God and from where God also could have been born.”

A lot of work has been done in connection with ’the original face’ in the Tao tradition. The disciple is told, ”Find out what is your original face”. You might say, ”My face is my original face.” But if you pick up your pictures of last ten years you will find your face has changed ten times.

Steinbeck's wife was a German writer. Once she was showing her little son, his father's pictures right from childhood. When they were married, the father was 30 years old. He had curly hair and a beautiful face. The little child asked his mother "Who is this handsome guy with curly hair?" "Why, that is your father, can't you recognise him?" she said. "If this is my father then who is the bald man who stays in our house? I thought that was my father!" the child asked.

It must have been difficult for the mother to explain to the child. Which face is original? Which face is really yours – the 3 years old or the 30 years old? The one that you are born with or the one with which you die? Which is your authentic face?

In the Tao tradition the Sadhaka is told to meditate and find out his authentic face. The Sadhaka is confused. He comes back to the Guru and asks, "What do you mean by the original face?" The Guru replies, "That face which was yours before you were born or which will be yours even after you will die. That face which was with you before you appeared in the world and which will be with you when you disappear from this world. That face alone is authentic; all the rest is mere clothing that is given to you and taken away from you."

And Lao Tzu says – "That which was even before God, that alone is the authentic face of Truth" – when everything was unmanifest. When nothing had manifested".

The Vedas and the Upanishads have testified to three states of Existence. One state is when Existence is manifest: flowers bloom, birds sing, there are people on earth, there are the Sun and the stars. It is a state in which creation is incessantly appearing and expanding. The second state is that of annihilation, when the earth begins to contract and disintegrate. Flowers fall, birds die all sound fades and also the stars and the Sun. The former is when Existence is being created and is young and vigorous and the latter is when Existence gets old and is nearing its end. So the states of creation and annihilation are like the breath that goes in and out.

The Hindu philosophy has likened the creation of Existence to the in-going breath of God and its annihilation as His out-going breath. The breath of Brahma, is mythology but it is meaningful. One breath of Brahma is creation and another breath of Brahma is annihilation. Now there is a state beyond these two states when the breath neither goes in nor out. This is third state – where there is neither creation nor annihilation. There should be something which is not created during creation and which is not destroyed during annihilation. And that is the Original face.

Lao Tzu says, "It is the reflection of that which was even before God." Now Lao Tzu's each word needs to be pondered upon. He does not say, "This is it". He says, "It is only a reflection." Where there is the Seer, the Speaker, the I the ego – even if it be the gentle ego (asmita) – wherever 'I' exists, there can only be the reflection. But is this less – that we are able to see Truth even by means of a mirror? Lao Tzu takes care to see that we do not overlook the fact that this Truth is the Truth reflected from the mirror, – it cannot be any other. Another word he uses, is 'perhaps' as against insistence. This also is worth pondering upon.

The more our mind is filled with untruths, the more insistent we are. The greater the ego the greater the persistence in our speech. All our controversies are expostulations are not for the sake of truth but for the sake of our own obstinacy. When I say a particular thing is correct, the real question is not of its being correct or otherwise but of my having said so. In other words, I am right and you

are wrong. All controversies appear to be for the sake of knowing Truth but if we observe these arguments about the so-called truths, we shall find ego standing erect behind them. My truth must be correct, for then only can I be correct. If it is not, I am at fault – and I am never at fault!

This insistence on our own being right, dies together with the ego. Therefore the truths born of asmita, like the words of Buddha or Mahavira or Krishna or Christ or Mohammed or Lao Tzu, are not the outcome of the ego. They are therefore most non-insisting. They are the last word in giving: there is not the attitude in them to convince the listener and to make him believe. It is like words spoken – and that is all! Even then, after considerable thought, to add the word 'perhaps', is a very brave act; for we can never dream of saying perhaps about that which we hold authentic! We never use this word even to express our untruths! But here are people like Lao Tzu who insert this word even to the truth they have known!

We cannot use perhaps for our untruths for then the untruth will die. If you are questioned in court, "Did you commit theft?" what will you reply; – 'Perhaps'? We have to be obstinately persistent in the case of untruths. We shall have to gather as many witnesses and proofs to prove our authenticity. Untruth has no soul of its own. It is entirely dependent on the strength of your proofs and insistences to keep it alive.

But Truth needs no help from you. Therefore it is, that people like Lao Tzu and Mahavira could use the word perhaps. If Mahavira was asked, "Does the soul exist?" he would say, "Perhaps". Who could know better than Mahavira about the authenticity of the soul? He who knows so definitely should give such an indefinite answer! The fact is, the existence of the soul is so self-evident that he sees no point insisting on it. When he says, "Perhaps", he means to convey that no one should depend on his answer. That even without him, the soul is. He says 'perhaps' for he feels his knowing can be wrong.

We cannot say 'perhaps' even for the untruths we utter, whereas a person like Lao Tzu speaks of Truth also as 'perhaps.' The reason is there is no substance matter in what we speak – only our persistence keeps it alive.

There is a very well-known pleader of India by the name of Dr. Harisingh Gaud. No one earned as much as he did out of advocacy. The Sagar University was built from his donation. He has written in his memoirs that when he took leave of his guru who had taught him law, he was given a parting advice. His guru said, "If truth is on your side, hammer on the facts. If truth is not in your favour, then hammer on the laws." Then Dr. Harisingh asked him, "If truth is not clear and if the facts are not clear and if the rules of the law are also not quite clear, then what is one to do?" His guru replied, "Then hammer on the table! All depends on how you shake the Court. The harder you hit the table the more will they be convinced."

Lao Tzu and Mahavira are absolutely non-hammering people. They do not proclaim by thumping the table. The most certain of truths they express with 'perhaps'. If anyone contradicts against their statements they reply again with a "perhaps you are right."

The method evolved by Mahavira to express Truth contains not one but seven 'perhaps'! Therefore Mahavira's explanations become very intricate. A small statement – and Mahavira gives seven explanations! If you ask: "Is this a vessel?" Mahavira will reply, "Perhaps it is a vessel." Perhaps

some one would: call it by the name of clay and not vessel and then there would be an argument. So Mahavira says, "Perhaps it is a vessel". Then he at once gives another statement, "Perhaps it is not a vessel but clay." Now it is possible someone might refute both these statements. So Mahavira makes a third statement. He says, "Perhaps the pot is and perhaps it is not". The vessel is clay and the vessel is a vessel and clay is not a vessel, hence third statement.

Then Mahavira would say that even then someone might say, "Then if it is not clear whether it is a vessel or whether it is clay or whether it is both or whether it is not both, what then?" In that case Mahavira would reply, "It is perhaps undefinable."

Then there are three more statements that Mahavira makes. There are in all, seven combinations. There cannot be more. There is no eighth statement. We think there can be only two statements. We say, "God is or God is not." There finishes our argument. No, Mahavira says, "Perhaps God is, perhaps He is not; Perhaps He is and is not; perhaps God is undefinable; perhaps God is and is undefinable; perhaps He is not and is undefinable or perhaps God is and is not and is undefinable". Thus there are seven statements.

Mahavira says, "Logic ends with the seventh statement." No eighth statement is logically possible. All that has to be said is completed in these seven statements.

Therefore Mahavira's reasoning is seven-folded logic.

When Lao Tzu says 'perhaps', he means to say that he makes no claims, nor does he insist that you should believe that what he has known is the Truth. He only means that that is how he experienced it and what is the worth of the experience of an ordinary person like him? Therefore he makes use of the term, 'perhaps'. "What is the standing of this small vessel before the gigantic, infinite emptiness? Therefore I say, 'perhaps'. What I say could be wrong also. What I have experienced, can only be a dream!" Thus Lao Tzu explains.

We try to give the stamp of reality even to our dreams but Lao Tzu has the courage to call his experience of Truth as a dream! The most unique thing about it is, that this courage only comes on the advent of Truth. As long as truth does not dawn on us, we never have this courage. If we have the slightest doubt about one truth, we proclaim it louder. We try to make up the deficit by substituting loud proclamations.

Mulla Nasruddin happened to be staying in a village. He did not understand the language spoken there. The pundits of the village conducted their meetings in Latin and the Mulla went religiously every day to hear them. People wondered – what did he get out of it? But he was the first to come and the last to leave. One day they decided to ask him. "You do not follow a single word of our language and yet you are so attentive. Do you really understand what is going on?" Asked one of them. "I do not follow anything, but one thing I understand very well and that is that the one who shouts the loudest is definitely telling an untruth. He who loses his temper, he too expounds untruths. Who speaks quietly, who is non-assertive – all this I observe."

The Mulla went on to say that had he known the language, it would not have been so easy to understand all this. "Then I would get involved in the language," he said. "Now I observe the face, the eyes, the expressions, the actions and though I do not know what is being said, this much I can

tell from what depth the speaker answers – whether he knows what he is saying or he says without knowing."

Our gestures, our emphasis, speak all about our knowledge. Remember, the greater the untruth, the greater the emphasis; the greater the truth, the lesser is the emphasis. Truth is enough unto itself. It requires no insistence from anyone. It stands on its own footings and requires no props.

There is a Jew thinker by the name of Sadeh. He was urged many times to write about himself, his life, so that people could understand what he said. But Sadeh never allowed his life-story to be written nor spoke of any incident from his life. Sadeh would say, "If what I say is the Truth, it will abide even without me. Then where is the need to know my life-story?"

When he was pressed very hard to speak on himself, he made one statement. He said, "If we inspect the life of Jesus and then pick up the Bible, we shall never read it." What is the life-story of Jesus? He was born in a stable.

The story goes that he was born of a virgin mother. This is doubtful. How can a child be born to a virgin? So Sadeh says that it is clear that there is a doubt who his father was, nothing is known where he studied or if he studied at all! That he stayed in the houses of drunkards and prostitutes and made friends with people of the lowest class of society, is very well known. He was guest in the houses of people with whom no respectable person would like to associate.

At the age of 33, he was hung on the Cross. Two thieves were also crucified along with him; and those who meted out this punishment were certain that this man was either mad or dangerous.

One whose antecedents are unknown, who was born in a stable, whose heritage was questionable, who courted the friendship of drunkards and prostitutes and spent his nights in the company of gamblers and who was crucified along with two thieves at the age of thirty-three, would anyone take up the Bible after knowing all this? Would you also feel the Bible worth reading if you have first read the life-story of its author? no. So what we do is just the opposite. We read the Bible first, then the life-story of the author makes no difference.

Therefore Sadeh says, "Leave my life-story alone." What difference will it make whether Sadeh smokes or whether he drinks. If what he says is the Truth, it cannot be falsified by any of his actions. If what he says is not the Truth then even if he takes nothing but plain water, his words cannot be true. Sadeh says, "There is no need to bring me in. Try and see directly what is being said".

This perhaps is a method of eliminating the self. By this statement perhaps the man is trying to convey that his person can be left out altogether. There is no insistence on his part, therefore he does not enter into the discussion at all. He places the Truth directly before his listeners and steps aside. If he maintains, "This is the Truth", then he enters the debate for if some one says, "This is not the Truth," then the responsibility of proving it falls on his shoulders. Sahed says, "If I say 'Perhaps this is the Truth,' then I stand outside of any argument. The truth now stands on its own footing. If it is capable of convincing others, that is enough; and if it cannot convince, then what else can convince you, if even Truth cannot?"

This is why people like Lao Tzu, make use of the term 'perhaps', while expounding Truth, the Truth which for them exists completely and about which they are completely assured within themselves.

This seems very contrary. Those who expound untruths never begin their statements with 'perhaps', whereas those that expound Truth, always begin with 'perhaps'. He who propounds a falsehood is always insistent whereas he who utters Truth is never insistent.

Jesus is being crucified. Pilate, the man who ordered his crucifixion asks him, "Tell me, O youth, before you die – what is Truth, for which you have put yourself in this predicament?" Jesus gave no reply. Pilate asked again. Jesus looked up but spoke not a word. It is 2,000 years ago that this happening took place and 2,000 people must have since then raised this question – If Jesus knew, why did he not tell Pilate? Or perhaps he did not know. Pilate could never have dreamt, that Jesus knew anything of Truth.

There is a story which, though, not authentic, is very prevalent. It is said that 30 years after the crucifixion, Pilate retired from governorship. Someone asked him if he remembered a youth by the name of Jesus whom he had ordered to be crucified. Pilate waved his hand and said, "Which youth? I ordered the crucifixion of thousands of people during my governorship".

The man who was going to capture the hearts of at least half the people of this world, was an unknown entity to him who crucified him thirty years before. He could not recall who he was. From this it is clear that Pilate must have taken Jesus to be a youth who was out of his mind and was talking nonsense. He must have pitied him.

But Jesus' not answering was very meaningful and is worthy of thought.

It was not that Jesus was incapable of replying for he had answered many a time before and given priceless answers. He could have answered but he remained silent. And this was a golden opportunity for if Pilate was satisfied with his answer, he could have spared him the Cross.

Perhaps that is why Jesus did not answer for he did not deem it proper to save his own skin by taking shelter behind Truth. It was perhaps, so that the whole purport of his message may not get twisted; for then it would have been said that Pilate asked, Jesus answered and so was saved from the Cross. Many a time people stopped him on the road and asked and Jesus answered. At times they came even at midnight and Jesus answered. Jesus never refused for answer.

This was the first occasion on which a person on the cross was thus questioned – what is Truth? And this was his agony, his distress – to convey Truth! And in such a situation, perhaps the message could have gone to many. Therefore, his silence baffled all. But those who could understand Jesus from within, knew that any answer to the question at this juncture, would tantamount to an effort to save the individual. The Truth then would not be without urgency and persistence. Then perhaps the thought to save himself could have crossed his mind. So he remained silent.

Lao Tzu says, "Perhaps, it is only its reflection." This word 'reflection' has been used with great far-sight by Lao Tzu; for then if there is any error, it will be on the part of Lao Tzu and not on the part of Truth. If we say "This is the Truth," then any lapse would be attributed to Truth. It has forever been the characteristic of those who know to say that whatever the lapse is entirely due to us. If you make a distorted statement regarding Truth, the exponent of Truth will take the blame upon himself and say perhaps there was something amiss in his method of explanation that caused you to misunderstand. There could be no error in Truth. The error is always in the individual.

By referring to Truth as a reflection, Lao Tzu conveys, how he has seen Truth – like a reflection in a mirror. Now the mirror can be faulty. You must have seen mirrors that distort your figure, in some you appear huge, in others, very small. One thing about the mirror is very definite, that your right eye appears as your left eye and your left eye as your right. Things do not appear as they are, in the mirror, they become opposite. This does not strike you when you look into the mirror for you yourself have no knowledge of your right eye or left eye.

When you hold a written page before a mirror, you will realise the words are topsy turvy. You also appear topsy turvy but since you have no knowledge of your authentic form how will you know that you are topsy turvy?

A scientist who has done a lot of research on the human face has discovered the fact that the two parts of the same face are not identical. His method is as follows:

He would take a picture of you and cut it vertically into two exactly equal parts. Then he will take another picture of you and cut it in the same manner. Then he would join the right side of the first picture to the right side of the second, and thus also the two left sides. You will be surprised to see the result. Both faces will be completely different from each other. If both these new pictures are placed before you, you will never say they belong to the same man. You will say they are two different people.

So much transformation takes place in the mirror but we are not aware of it.

By using the word reflection we mean that whatever medium reflects the Truth, distorts it to some extent, for which the medium alone is responsible. The fact is, we can only know Truth through a medium. One medium is the ego. Ego is a medium like darkness. If someone tries to know Truth in darkness, he cannot know anything; he merely gropes in darkness. Yet he talks of Truth, like people talking of the atman, God, heaven and hell. All this is talking in darkness. They know nothing.

Nasruddin is sitting in the Masjid. The priest was talking so much about heaven that all the gathering became eager to go to heaven. ”Whoever wants to go to heaven, stand up!” The priest shouted. Everyone stood up except Nasruddin. The priest was surprised. ”Don’t you wish to go to heaven, Mulla?” The priest asked. The Mulla replied, ”I do not take the trouble to stand up for that which is not clear. I am sitting. That is very clear to me and so I sit.” ”Besides,” said Nasruddin, ”if heaven is to be reached by standing up, I shall not go to such a heaven. Can one not reach heaven sitting down? For one thing, it is not clear where one is going or whether there is such a place or there is not. These people have stood up without any reason. Besides, let us see, if all those who stand have reached heaven, I too shall reach sitting. Let us see who reaches!”

How significant heaven appears to the mind. There is a great longing for liberation (Moksha). Desires burn within us to attain Truth. Nothing is clear, what is to be attained. Everything is in darkness. We close our eyes in darkness and begin to dream. Ego is like darkness. The truths we evolve in it are mere phantoms, dreams. They are all the creations of our own mind and have no relationship with Truth. Asmita is like the lustre of light; but the Truth that is seen by this light is also reflected Truth. Where there is neither the ego nor asmita, where the ’I’ is not, there alone can it be known, which is not a reflection but Truth itself. But then the speaker also is lost.

Lao Tzu speaks from the outermost boundary, that farthest point where the ego has turned into 'Naught' and where the asmita, which is a pure form of the ego is also about to fade. From this point Lao Tzu says, "I do not know from where all this is born, who is their creator, whose son he is? Perhaps this is a reflection of that which was even before God!" This is the final statement that is made at the boundary-line. Thus is the 'Boundary-Statement'. Beyond this, man is lost – even physically.

It is a fact that after making this statement, Lao Tzu was lost – even physically. I was talking metaphysically when I said a man is lost after crossing this boundary. But there was no trace of Lao Tzu's body after he wrote this book. Where had Lao Tzu gone? Did he live thereafter or did he die? Did he fall into an abyss? Where is Lao Tzu's grave? Who buried him? When did he die, on which day and date? Nothing is known about this. This is the first and the last book.

Mulla Nasruddin's friend, who had become an air-pilot, offered to take him for a ride. After the ride when Mulla came out of the plane he said to his friend. "Thank you for your two trips." "But that was a single trip!" His friend corrected him. "No", said the Mulla, "It was my first and last also."

This is Lao Tzu's first and last book; his first and last statement. He has written nothing before this; and nothing is known of him after he wrote this book. This is the statement on the boundary-line. Lao Tzu speaks from the farthermost point from where life is once again lost into the clouds, where even asmita merges in the Void. He speaks from the last moment where the jump is taken into the abyss, from where there is no return. This is the statement at the border-land – both physical and spiritual.

Perhaps the physical disappearance of Lao Tzu goes to show that there is no point in remaining once the border-line is reached. There is no meaning in existing physically thereafter. After delivering this book at the check-post, Lao Tzu was never seen again.

I have told you this book was written on the check-post of China's border. In three days, Lao Tzu finished this book and handed it to the officer-in-charge there and came out. The officer had barely examined the book (which was initially very small) when he came out and asked the whereabouts of Lao Tzu. No one had seen him even come out of the room – not even the guards on duty! They tried to track his footsteps. They were nowhere to be seen. Soldiers were sent out to track him down but to no avail. They searched high and low for the man who wrote the most wonderful book on earth but there was no trace of him anywhere.

The king of China did his best to find him for what he had given was beyond their comprehension. For eighty years this man lived amongst them and they did not recognise him! This was because we only can recognise words and not the individual. They searched for him high and low but he was never found. Perhaps it was to convey this message that Lao Tzu disappeared.

Such people not only say what they say but demonstrate it in their lives and in their personalities. Lao Tzu's disappearance demonstrates the fact that his statements were given from the plane where even asmita becomes Void. Even at this point he declares that it is nothing more than a reflection.

Alas, if we only could recognise dreams! Then it would be very easy to recognise Truth, and if only we knew what reflection is, we would then have understood the Original. If we take dreams to be

reality and reflections to be Truth, then it is difficult to know and recognise. We are so steeped in dreams and lost in reflections that we do not even recognise bare facts as they are and Truth is beyond our conception.

This afternoon a person came to see me. He is a specialist of the Russian method of film direction. He was talking to me about meditation. He said, "There is great similarity between your method of meditation and our method of film direction. Our method requires that the sensitivity of the actor should become so sharp that if he holds a paper flower in his hand and declares it to be a rose, he must get the scent of rose from it. If he cannot be so engrossed in his acting that he does not get the scent of the rose, his face can never depict the right expression required for that act. If his face is to show the correct expression of a person who stands next to a real rose, he has to know and accept the paper flower to be a rose. The moment this paper flower turns into a real rose in his eyes, his nostrils will expand and his eyes will begin to see the colour of the rose, his very face will blush with the redness of the rose! If the paper-flower becomes a living flower, then alone will the actor have put in his very best in his performance."

I told him "Meditation is exactly the opposite of this. The Russian method is no method of meditation. If you look at it properly, you will find it is a training for imagination. If a man's imagination is allowed to expand so that a paper-flower looks to be an authentic flower, it still remains a paper-flower!

"Now, how does he see it? He projects his mind and implants the imaginary flower on to the paper-flower. So much so, that the paper-flower disappears and is replaced by his imaginary flower. It is this that brings on the fragrance of the rose and not the paper flower. His imagination gets so fixed that the artificial rose becomes real. This is imagination and not meditation."

In meditation, there is no super-imposition. If it is a paper flower, it should smell of the paper it is made of – even papers have their own particular smell. If it is a Russian paper, it will smell differently, for the trees of Russia smell different. If you take up a Japanese book, it will smell different for exactly the same reason. I have become such an adept at smelling papers that if I close my eyes and smell a book, I shall be able to tell you where it comes from. The smell is different for the trees in each country and they have their own peculiar scent.

If you can detect what paper the flower is made of by its particular smell. I will say you are in meditation. To know the fact as it is without adding any thing to it on our own, is meditation. But we all project our own thoughts on everything. It is not the actor alone who does this. We see things that are not. We are all adept at seeing a rose in a paper-flower.

When a man falls in love with someone, he sees that in his beloved which is not. When a person begins to loathe someone he too sees things in him that do not exist. None of us are ever unbiased – we are either in love or hate. We always take sides – either this or that. Therefore it happens that the greater the love before marriage the earlier the marriage breaks. The reason is, we begin to see such a huge fragrant rose that does not exist and so is never attained. Indian marriages are never a failure for we do not allow any imagination; the element of Love is not there at all! We begin with a paper flower and know it as such. What can be plainer or worse than this? Nothing.

Love means an enchanted eye. It sees things that do not exist at all! Then as you stay together, you begin to see all your dreams falling one by one and that begins to appear which actually is. Then

you feel you have been cheated whereas it is not so. It was you who had projected some attributes to the person, which he did not possess.

In a way, we live with this art of projection. In each thing we see that which is not there. Thus we create a world of dreams around us. Therefore we have to cry everyday; for wherever the dreams crash they fall in splinters like glass.

Mulla Nasruddin was returning home one day with a lot of crockery. He was so engrossed in his thoughts that the parcel dropped from his hands. All the crockery broke into bits and were scattered all over the road. The Mulla stood looking while a crowd gathered. They all wondered why the Mulla was silent. Everything was broken, yet the Mulla was silent! At last he looked up and said, "What is the matter? You idiots, have you never seen a fool before? I stand here because I am a fool. I break things. What are you waiting here for?"

The Mulla returns empty-handed home. The wife questions, "Where are the goods?" Mulla replied, "It was all china. It came as far as it could and that was enough. How could I vouch for their coming as far as the home?" The goods were of china and it was enough that they reached as far as they could!

We all realise this in the last lap of our lives. Everyday we see things breaking. Today one thing breaks. Tomorrow another and yet another on the third day. In spite of this we do not realise that the goods we carry are made of clay – They are dreams, projections. Like a house of cards we build our house. The slightest wind and it crumbles down. And we are such, we blame the winds! Then we pray to God to take these winds elsewhere, let them break the houses of others but save ours! No prayer can save a paper house, not even God.

We build boats of paper and set out on a journey to discover the Ocean of Infinity! The wonder is not that you never reach but that your boat can go even a little distance. It is a miracle! As the Mulla says, "The goods were of china. It was good enough as far as they came; and it is a wonder they came so far!"

Lao Tzu says that the experience of Truth he had, that too is a dream, for it is the Truth seen in a dream and hence it cannot be the authentic Truth. He says, "As long as the 'I' remains, however slight, all is experienced in a dream. My being is the ability to dream. If 'I am', I shall make reflections. I shall not be able to see that which is. For that can be seen only when my state becomes like that of the moth – it flies to cling to the flames and is burnt – it becomes the flame!"

The greatest of Truth is but a reflection. This does not mean that there is no Truth outside of reflections. There is such a Truth, in the search of which so much is said and written. But the only condition of knowing is the extinction of the 'I'. When the ego is lost then only are the reflections lost with it.

It is just as when you watch a movie on the screen. Your attention is so drawn that you forget there is nothing actually on the screen. It is the projector behind you that is the actual thing. But you never turn back and look at it. When the picture is over, you praise the film you saw on the screen. You never think it all came from the projector. It is all a play of the projector and you have your back to it and where you see there is actually nothing!

People like Lao Tzu who know say that our ego, our asmita, no matter how pure, is only a projector. It produces dreams. It projects things as we like to see them. This is a matter for the wise to ponder upon. I see here in our everyday happenings: Someone practises meditation. After two days he comes and says, "I see red colour. What is your opinion? Am I progressing well?" Another comes, "I see a circle of light. Is this good progress?" Another says, "I feel some movement in the spine. Is my kundalini awakening?" For an hour or two a man sits for meditation. In that also he opens his eyes now and then and then he thinks he has Truth on the palm of his hand, just because there is a slight creeping sensation in the spine!

And here there is one like Lao Tzu – Void stands before him, all is emptiness and yet he makes no claim that 'this is Truth.' He says, "This is a reflection of that which was even before God – a mere shadow!"

This path is very arduous and it requires an equal proportion of alertness.

The mind puts forth many temptations. When a little strip of cloth is attained it makes you feel as if you have captured a whole mill! The temptation is so great that one does not feel like disbelieving it. If such a man is told the truth, he does not come again. If you tell him that is nothing, he gets annoyed with you. I have experienced this. The man feels he has come with such a great experience and I say it is nothing! He promptly sets out in search of another guru who will acclaim his progress. Now such seekers do not come with the intention of seeking something. He wants the Guru to be a mere witness that he is something. But these are the projections of a petty mind.

Strange and wonderful are these people – like Lao Tzu! Buddha has said, "As long as I keep seeing things, I shall know I have not reached up to Truth. As long as there are images, there are objects, I shall not halt. I want to reach a place where there are objects no more, nothing to be seen, where nothing remains, where there is pure emptiness. I shall not stop my search till then." And Buddha wandered for six years.

Some Guru would give him the vision of light. Then he would ask, "What now? I have experienced light but nothing has happened. I am where I was!" Then the guru would fold his hands and say, "Seek elsewhere, I showed you what I knew." For six years Buddha visited each and every guru in Bihar. Whatever they told him, he did. Then again the same question "What next?" He experienced no Truth.

Seeing red, yellow and green colours is seeing Truth? If you see a flame within you, what would you think? People write to me that they see rivers and streams and mountains – are they progressing well? What have these to do with Truth? But the projector of imagination is forever working within us. When you sit silent, it at once begins to weave all kinds of webs before you. Those who are fond of music find humming songs, those who are fond of colour, see various colours and these begin to spread.

Lao Tzu's courage is something to be noted. In the very last moment also, he says it is a reflection. It must be a reflection for 'I am' still remaining. Truth is there where even I am not. This chapter finishes with this Sutra. Enough for today.

CHAPTER 15

Understanding, emptiness, surrender and effort

25 July 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

Question 1

WHY IS IT THAT NO REVOLUTION TAKES PLACE EVEN AFTER UNDERSTANDING? IF WE PRACTISE NON-ACTION, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO LABOUR? HOW IS PERFECTION IN EMPTINESS ATTAINED? IF THE VESSEL IS EMPTY, IT WILL ALSO DISINTEGRATE? WHAT IS THE WAY TO EMPTY THE MIND?

QUESTION:
LAO TZU SAYS THAT UNDERSTANDING IS ENOUGH AND THAT TRANSFORMATION TAKES PLACE TOGETHER WITH UNDERSTANDING. WE FEEL THAT WE HAVE UNDERSTOOD WELL BUT FEEL NO TRANSFORMATION WITHIN US. WHAT IS THE REASON? KINDLY EXPLAIN.

Bhagwan Sri: Lao Tzu says that once a matter becomes perfectly clear, there is nothing more to be done, for then the understanding leads all our actions and makes us do what is worth doing. What is not worth doing, falls of its own, just as dry leaves fall from a tree. Nothing is required to be done in order not to do what should not be done. What should be done, happens on its own, and what should not be done, stops happening also.

What is this understanding? Since you say that you feel you understand and yet the transformation that Lao Tzu talks of, does not take place! This then can mean only two things: either what Lao Tzu says is wrong or what we call understanding, is not understanding.

What Lao Tzu says is not wrong because not he alone but all those who have ever known on this earth, have all said the same thing. Whether it was Socrates in Greece or Buddha in India, they

have said the same thing, wherever a wise one has spoken, he has said only this: "Understanding is enough."

There are many points to be taken into consideration, then only shall we understand that if there is no transformation, it only means that what we know as understanding is not understanding.

The first thing is: why does the wrong thing happen through us and why do the right things not happen? What is the reason behind this – non-understanding or something else? If non-understanding is the reason, it will be eradicated by understanding. If the reason is other than non-understanding then nothing will change. The actual question is: that if ignorance is the cause of our actions, it should be wiped out by understanding.

For example: I go out of this room and knock my head against a wall. If the reason is, that the room is dark, then by lighting the room, this will not happen. If however, in spite of the light, if I still knock against the wall, then it can only mean two things: It either means there has been no light – I thought there was light but actually there was none. Or it may mean that knocking against the wall is not related to darkness. The reason in that case, must be quite different. Darkness and light have nothing to do with each other.

If it is something else that cannot be eradicated even by knowledge, then it will never be eradicated. That which cannot be destroyed by understanding, cannot be destroyed by anything else for there is nothing above understanding within us. Then we say, if understanding does not work, action might; but who will perform the action? It is the ignorant man who will perform the action and if it cannot be wiped out with knowledge, how can it be eradicated by the action of the ignorant?

But your question is reasonable, for we feel we have understood and yet no transformation takes place.

Now we have to understand that understanding can be of two kinds. There is one that is apparent understanding. We have a mechanism for understanding – intellect. With this intellect we can understand anything logically If any logical thought is placed before the intellect, it understands it very well. But intellectual understanding brings no transformation, for the intellect is a very small part of the individuality. Individuality is a very big thing. When you understand something intellectually, it does not mean you have understood your personality, your very being.

Up to the beginning of this century, the West was not clear about the fact that what we know as the intellect is 1/10th of the strength of the unconscious mind. I explain to you that anger is bad. You understand. But the intellect that has understood, has never been angry! Anger comes from the nine parts of the Unconscious that lie behind the conscious mind.

Take it this way I live in a house. There is a guard at the door of this house. Now this poor man causes no mischief. Whenever there is trouble it is the owner within who comes out and causes it. Whenever a preacher comes along. he catches hold of the door-man and explains to him that anger is bad and that he should not quarrel. The poor man admits he is quite aware of the fact that anger is bad. He says he is aware of the fact that whenever there is a fight, the owner comes from within and then there is chaos.

Now this preacher is not aware of the fact that the one he is preaching, has never indulged in anger or rowdyism and the one who has indulged in rowdyism has no line of communication with the watchman outside. Whenever the master comes with a rifle, the watchman falls at his feet, for he is the owner! When the master retires, the watchman is back on his stool, browsing over the fact that anger is not a good thing.

What you know as intellect, is only a part. If we divide your mind into parts, then one part understands, whereas nine parts are in darkness. All life's confusions and turmoils come from he darkness of these nine parts. When the desire for sex arises within you, it comes from these nine parts of the mind and when you read a book on Brahmacharya, it is 1/10th of your mind that reads it, the conscious part that is the watchman. The book appeals to you and you say it is correct. But when the other nine parts of the mind are filled with desire for sex, this one part of the conscious mind becomes ineffective and helpless. It is brushed aside by the wave of desire that rises from the folds of the unconscious.

The intellect is assigned only one job: To try and understand at one time and sit and repent at another. This one part of the mind has no say anywhere.

Remember, the deeper the layer the stronger it is. Strength is never at the circumference. It is always at the centre. What we know as intellect, is at the circumference. It is the compound wall and no one keeps his treasures there. The treasure is always hidden in the innermost recesses of the house. So our life-energy is hidden in the innermost part of our being while the intellect stands at the door. It is this intellect with which we read, it is this intellect with which we hear and understand.

When Lao Tzu says, "When it comes within your understanding, the transformation takes place," he talks of the centre within you. When it comes within the understanding of that which is within you, the ultimate Master; when he begins to understand, the transformation takes place.

Now our difficulty also, is very genuine. We feel we understand and yet there is no transformation. We are where we were. Now this so-called understanding starts another kind of confusion! Now we are divided into two. The mind drives us to do one thing and we wish to do another, which however never happens for we can do only that which comes from within. Then remorse and the feeling of lowliness and inferiority catches hold of the mind. Then we fall in our own esteem. Then we feel, "I am nothing. I am not worth anything."

So, Lao Tzu is not talking about this understanding. This intellectual understanding is a deception. It is just as if someone tells us that if you sprinkle water on a tree, it will give out flowers. Now we go and sprinkle the leaves with water but no flowers appear. From this it is evident that what we were told was not true. Or perhaps, the water we sprinkled was not water. It is then natural that we should question why there are no flowers. But he who told us to water the tree, was talking of watering the roots of the tree.

Now this is an interesting fact that if you water the leaves, the water does not reach the roots but if you water the roots, the water reaches the leaves. The reason is simple: the roots have the mechanism to convey water to all parts of the tree, whereas the leaves have not. The roots are the centre and the leaves are the circumference of the tree. Therefore, whether the leaves remain or fall, is non-essential. New leaves come. But if the roots are destroyed, they are difficult to replace – impossible.

Understand these two things. One is: That which you call understanding, is merely a reasoning, a theoretical, intellectual, understanding. It is not intrinsic, pertaining to self or our entire understanding. It does not reach your very being. Therefore there is no transformation. Therefore, the matter is completely understood but you are where you are – there is no difference in you. What is to be done to bring about this understanding that can reach up to our very roots?

All our education and training is of the so-called understanding. We learn mathematics with this intellect, we learn languages with this intellect and it is enough for our day to day purpose. And these are workable only because our innermost centre has no mathematics of its own. If it had, schools and colleges would have served no purpose in the world. When you add two and two together, there is no one within to say it is not four but five. If there was, no number of schools and universities could force you to accept 2+2 as 4. You will always say it is five.

Universities are alright for practical purposes of day to day existence because mathematics, languages and whatever is taught at school is created by man. If these are not taught to a person, he will remain without them. If we do not teach a child to speak a language, he will not be able to speak on his own but we do not have to teach a child how to be angry. If we do not teach a child mathematics, he will never know it but no school or college is required to teach the sexual desire. Keep him in a jungle, away from everything, there too he will learn. There is no question of learning, he will know it of his own for it rises from within him.

This means that whatever arises from within you, in life, puts you into a predicament. You are never in difficulty regarding things that do not arise from within you.

You can learn any language for it is superficial and the mind within does not offer any opposition. What the schools and colleges teach, trains the upper layers of the mind. But when you desire to change your life from within, you are up against difficulties for then also, you make use of the surface layers of your mind only. This is the crux of the problem. You say to yourself, ”I shall not be angry” but this also is said by the same mind that learns mathematics. Anger is a different problem altogether. Mathematics is man’s creation, anger is a creation of nature and not of man.

It is when we try to develop our understanding by this portion of the mind that the difficulty starts. We find it does not work. If this understanding is to be taken to the innermost recesses of your being, there is a method of doing so. Now this method means that you must first understand how you have obtained this superficial understanding This also, is a training for you.

After a training of 20-25 years, it is now possible for you to understand that 2 and 2 make 4.

Mulla Nasruddin was found one day dressed in a pompous attire. People were intrigued at his lavish clothes and he even wore a diamond ring on his finger! ”What has happened Mulla?” They asked, crowding round him. ”I won a lottery,” the Mulla replied. ”How did it happen?” They asked again. ”For three nights,” the Mulla replied, ”I dreamt the same dream. I saw number 7 each time. So I multiplied 7 by 3 and laid my bet on 28.” ”But 7 x 3 is 21 Mulla and not 28,” they insisted. ”Be that as it may,” the Mulla replied haughtily. ”What difference does that make? I played 28 and won!”

You are trained to learn that 2 and 2 is 4. It does not come from within you. This has to be learnt and known. Now there is a method also to carry your understanding to the innermost centre and for that you have to pass through various processes.

When Lao Tzu talked about this, man was very simple as yet. Now things are very different and that is the cause of all difficulty. Lao Tzu's audience comprised villagers, simple, artless folks who had no intellectual training. They had no intellectual treasures. They were very close to nature, they were of innocent minds. If Lao Tzu were to speak to you, the very first question you would have asked would be the one that has been asked today. You would have said, "Though we understand...." The people who heard Lao Tzu never raised this question.

In the thousands of memoirs of Lao Tzu and Chuang-Tse, not one man has raised this question, that we have understood but life is the same. It is true that many of them said, "We do not understand, please explain again." Then Lao Tzu would explain again.

Once it so happened that a man came every day for twenty-one days to hear Lao Tzu. Every day he would tell Lao Tzu, "I have forgotten what you said yesterday. Please explain again". This went on for a few days. Lao Tzu's one disciple Ma Tzu could bear it no longer. On the morning of the fifth day, he stopped the man outside Lao Tzu's hut and said, "What is your problem?" The man replied, "I have forgotten what was said yesterday and so have come to ask again." Ma Tzu said, "Go away, do not enter in for one mad person is you and another is this Lao Tzu. If you come with the same question for the rest of your life, he will keep on explaining to you. Since the last five days I have noted that you are where you are with your question and he is where he is with his answer!"

When this talk was going on, Lao Tzu came out of his hut and said, "You have come brother? Come in. Have you forgotten? Then hear again." For twenty-one days this went on. On the twenty-second day, he did not come. The story goes that Lao Tzu went to his house, fearing he might be ill. "What is the matter? Why did you not come today?" Lao Tzu asked. The man replied. "I have understood. Now I am a different man."

Understand the difference: Had we gone twenty-one times to Lao Tzu it would not have been for the sake of understanding. The understanding, according to us, took place the very first day but life did not change. This man however says that: "If I understand what you have said, my life must change." And there the matter ends.

Whenever Buddha spoke – and this amazing fact came to be known when his books were edited – he repeated each line not less than three times. Now it is difficult to print the same matter three times. Besides, making the book three times its size, it proves burdensome to the reader also. Therefore when Rahula Sankrityayana first translated the vinaya pitaka, he put an asterisk after each line and in his notes he added another asterisk and yet another – the whole book is filled with asterisks.

What was the reason? Why did Buddha repeat so often? To explain a thing, a logic has to be given but to convey the thing to the innermost to those simple people, all that was needed was repetition, which then became mantra-like and suggestible and it quickly penetrated the innermost centre. Continuous repetition was enough. Each repetition helped it to penetrate more within.

But our intellect grasps and understands at the very outset so that repetition is not required. If it is repeated the listener will complain that his time is being wasted. He will say, "I have understood. Now proceed further."

Today, people who are experimenting with the unconscious mind, are doing nothing except repeating. For instance, there was a great psychologist in Paris by the name of Emile Coue who cured thousands of people. He used to lay his patient on a couch and repeat continuously for one hour, "You are not ill, you are not ill."

His patient could have easily told him "Enough. I have understood. Where is the need to repeat it over and over again?" But Emile would say, "You have understood from the very beginning but this repetition will carry the message deep within you." After a little while the superficial intellect – which takes interest only in the new and not in the old – will soon get bored and go off to sleep. Hypnosis is only this and no more. The superficial consciousness is put to sleep.

But Emile keeps repeating. Then when the conscious mind falls off to sleep, the layers of the unconscious pick up the echo. After sometime, these layers also fall off to sleep. Then the layers behind these, pick up the suggestion. This goes on and on till the message reaches the innermost core. When this centre believes that you are not ill, the illness is no more.

For this reason, several methods of mantras, dhyana and tantra and various other processes were evolved. All this came later as man began to be more sophisticated. Till the times of Lao Tzu, there was no need, for people were simple, artless. The door of their innermost being was open and there was no sentinel of intellect guarding it. Therefore, whatever was spoken by a person like Lao Tzu, used to penetrate deep within. Arrangements were made to this effect.

He alone could approach Lao Tzu, who was ready and willing to have faith in him. If anyone began to debate with Lao Tzu, he would tell him, "You go to so-and-so Guru for sometime, and stay with him."

I was recently reading the life-story of a Sufi fakir – a wonderful Sufi. A great pundit of the village came to hear him once. He found that the fakir was not well-versed in grammar and his knowledge of language was also insufficient. He told the fakir, "First you explain the language and its grammar to the people who hear you. Begin from the beginning. What is this? You talk of such high things when your language, your grammar is wanting?"

The Sufi told him, "Bear with me a while. Be my guest for some time." The fakir's miracles were well known. The pundit accepted his invitation. He stayed. The Sufi told him, "Pray will you teach grammar to all the dogs and cats that gather near my hut in the evening?"

The pundit thought this was madness but since the fakir said it and he was a man of miracles, he thought there must be some mystery. Perhaps these are no ordinary dogs and cats. Or perhaps there is some other reason. Perhaps I might learn something in the course of teaching them. Thinking thus, he began to teach them.

He taught the simplest of lessons but the dogs and cats would have none of it. Six months passed, he was well nigh tired. The fakir would ask, "Any progress? There seems none. I hope you have started from the very beginning." He said he had started from the very beginning and that there was nothing beyond that. The fakir asked, "What is the difficulty? Why is there no progress?" The pundit said, "They do not know the language. They do not know how to speak! Had they known how to speak, I would have taught them grammar!"

The fakir said, "The things I talk of, belong to a world, the language of which you do not know, nor the grammar. Had you the slightest knowledge of the grammar of my world, perhaps I could have made a beginning with you."

This was a set rule of olden days that when a person came to debate, the Guru sent him to a place where there was only debate and debate, so that in time he became tired of it. He would then be so disillusioned with debate that he would come back and ask if the Guru would show the way. He was tired of argument.

Then alone did people like Lao Tzu speak.

There is a story about a Sufi fakir. There were two fakirs who stayed opposite each other. The disciple of one of them, approached his guru and said, "The Sufi next door is spreading all kinds of stories about you. He even maligns you and spreads horrible rumours about you. Why do you not set him right? Why do you not say something to him?"

The fakir told him, "Why don't you go and find out yourself? But do not ask him in haste for priceless things are not told to a stranger. If a traveller, walking on the road asks a question the answers are only good for the road." "Then what shall I do?" The disciple asked.

"Go and serve him for a year. Try to be as near to him as possible. Win his confidence. Then some day, seeing the right hour and opportunity put him the question."

For a year the disciple served his Guru's enemy. He won his confidence and was very close to him. One night as he was pressing his legs, thinking the moment to be opportune, he asked him, "Why do you speak against and abuse the fakir across the road? What is the secret?" The fakir replied, "I shall tell you since you ask but tell no one. I am his disciple. I am forbidden to give out the secret. You better go and ask him yourself. Remember, these things are not spoken about to a stranger. Try to be as near to him as possible."

Now the poor disciple was in a dilemma! Thinking him to be the Guru's enemy, he had set out to solve the mystery and this man turned out to be his Guru's disciple! He went back to his Guru and served him devotedly for two years. Then one day as he was bathing the Guru and nobody was about, he asked him, what the mystery was.

The Guru said, "He is my disciple. I have specially placed him there to spread false and derogatory rumours about me. Those who believe the false rumours, do not come to me for they are false. This saves my precious time, which I utilise on those only who are really the seekers of Truth. Those who turn back by rumours alone, are not genuine seekers. This is my own man and he has served me as no other can. He has saved me from hundreds of useless seekers."

This was the general rule: When a person was filled with faith, this means, when a person was ready to open the portals of his heart directly, then the real Guru begins his work.

What are the psychologists, the psychoanalysts of today doing? They do only this, Psychoanalysis is carried out on a patient for three years. For hours on end the psychoanalyst talks to the patient on the couch. The patient keeps talking and he keeps listening. Why? By and by the superficial

things will fade away and the patient will begin to speak of his inner feelings. Then after some time these too fade away and the patient talks of his innermost problems. Then an opening is created. By talking to the psychoanalyst continuously for a year, he brings out all that is within him. Then when the analyst sees that the things that were deeply embedded within have begun to come out, then the time has come when the patient is open to suggestions. Now his inner gates are open and some things can be implanted within which can later fructify.

Understanding means: Something that reaches the innermost layers of your being. Reason, logic, however. will never allow this and we try to explain only by logic. Reasoning is the cause of all confusion; logic is the sentinel. Reason says, ”First convince me. Then only will I let you meet the master. Since you cannot convince me, how can I let you meet the master?” Then a further difficulty arises when the intellect is made to understand: It begins to feel itself the master.

Then he sees that he understands but no problem is solved for that which we call the intellect, has no power of its own. It has no ’force to act’; that lies within in the innermost recesses behind it. Therefore this interposition takes place.

So if there is no direct access to the centre within, then this guard of intellect has to be broken. Something has to be done to that effect. Meditation has to be practised. Some such method of meditation has to be used to make you irrational.

The method I apply for meditation is entirely irrational. The rational will run away from it. He will say, ”What is this? People dance, jump, shout, they have become senseless!” Intellect does the work of a censor. It says, ”Why do you laugh? There is nothing to laugh about! Why do you cry? There is no occasion to cry. Why do you jump, is the earth on fire? Why are you boxing the air?”

The intellect always says that whatever you do, should always be within reason. But nothing in life follows the pattern of logic. When love happens, where will reason be? When anger takes hold of you, where is logic? When you feel like hitting someone or committing suicide, where does your reasoning go? So, intellect does not work in the case of the essential needs of life; and you cannot descend to these innermost depths, if you listen to reason.

All the devices of meditation are efforts to break the layers of your intellect. Once they are broken, you become simple and artless. And when you are artless, you develop an inner vision from where things become clearly visible. Then the question does not arise that ’I have understood and yet there is no transformation’. To understand is transformation itself. To know is to be transformed. Knowledge is transformation. This question does not arise then.

But this question arises and I do not say it arises wrongly. As man is today, this question is bound to arise.

We are divided into two. The part of us that understands is not even remotely connected with that part of us which acts. The understanding part is separate and the acting part is separate. The house is divided into two. That which has the power to act, does not come to know. That which has no power to act, comes to listen. Now these two never meet. Then what is to be done?

There is only one way: The knowing layers are to be broken and we have to descend into the world of irrationality. Be a little irrational and see. Slowly and slowly the wall that divides the rational from

the irrational, will begin to crumble and you will begin to go in and out into both the worlds. Then you shall be integrated – one.

Then this man, who is an integrated personality, whatever comes within his understanding, fructifies. We are not one, we are 'two' and therefore one question becomes more and more entangled as we live on and after every life it gets more complicated for we split into more and more parts. Break this division from somewhere.

In the last Abu Shivir, there was one person, very learned and holding a government job. For two days he watched. He came to me and said, "I shall not be able to do this that the others are doing." I said, "How can you say you will not be able to do it? Have you tried or without trying you say this? Or is it because you are afraid that what is within will come out. What is the reason?" Our friend looked a little frightened. He glanced hesitantly at his wife who was sitting by his side.

I told his wife to leave us alone for perhaps he was not prepared to give up his intellectualism before her. Then he said, "This is my fear that if I begin to jump and dance, perhaps I shall cause a lot of confusion".

I told him, "Go ahead and cause as much confusion as you like. Try it out once. You will then get acquainted with a completely new part of yourself. That is your authentic face which comes up in your unguarded moment and over which you have no control. It comes up for a moment and is hidden again."

Psychologists say that anger is temporary madness. It is madness in its complete form, only temporary. It lasts a short while and hence you are not aware of it. If it becomes permanent, you will go mad. That which is temporary, can become permanent any time.

I advised him to try, "Shall I try? Shall I dare?" I told him it is no question of trying or daring. You will have tied a band on your eyes and when you feel the madness coming, forget that you are a big official, that you are an educated and intelligent man."

The third day I saw him jumping. He was a different person altogether. He came to me and said, "I feel so free and light! So much so, I feel I shall fly away. God knows how many maladies have left me. Now I feel, whatever you say, will come within my understanding."

The guard of intellectualism that stands watch on our mind has to be removed. Then only can understanding penetrate within you. So first do something to break this so-called understanding.

There was a Sufi fakir by the name of Junnaid. When a sadhaka first came to him he used to make him do all kinds of mad things. For instance, he would say, "Go to the market-place and declare that he who beats you with his shoe, would get a blessing in return. And he who does not will get a curse." If the sadhaka complained, he would say, "First take a round of the market-place, then only we shall talk. I cannot work on you directly. First go and get well beaten up so that which lords it over you has fallen. Then only can I talk directly to your within."

Lao Tzu talks of the inner depths of understanding. What he says is right; "Throw the bait with the fork of understanding. Then alone is the fish of transformation caught." But what do we do? We

sit at home fishing in a bucket! You cannot catch any fish and you know well there is no fish. The understanding with which you set out to catch the fish of transformation does not reach, for there is no transformation there. That which you look upon as intellect, is nothing more than a conformist and all orthodox part of your mind; and there nothing will come within your understanding.

Deeper than this, where the life-energy flows, where there is fluidity, where everything takes birth and where there is the chaos of Existence, from where anger, sex love, hatred, pity and compassion arise, there you have to throw the fishing hook. Not from where the mathematics and languages come, nor also from where the knowledge of physics and chemistry or history and geography comes but when the hook is thrown into the very fountain of origin, from where love, hate and other passions rise, then the fish of transformation is caught; and not until then.

Now, when there is one man in a million who is simple and artless, the happening takes place at once. But nowadays, such .a person is hard to come by. So we have to devise ways and means of breaking through the intellect. Then only can we enter within. And then? Then understanding and transformation are not two things. They are the two sides of the same coin.

Question 2

THE SECOND QUESTION ASKED IS: IF LAO TZU SAYS DO NOTHING THEN WHAT HAPPENS TO EFFORT AND LABOUR?

Do you think that not doing anything is a small insignificant effort? To do nothing is the greatest effort in this world. The power to do nothing, is the greatest possession in this world. Actions even children perform. There is no labour required for it. It is a natural, ordinary happening. Even animals are active. Not to do anything is a very great thing. So when you hear that Lao Tzu advises inactivity, all efforts are nullified. Surrender is the greatest resolve. Now this seems contrary somewhat. It does not come within our understanding. We feel that by placing our head on someone's feet, we have annihilated ourselves. But do you know? It is not the capability of an ordinary man to place his head on someone's feet. And thus to truly place one's head on someone's feet, to let go of one's self, is only possible of one who is completely a master of himself. How will you let yourself go? The mere action of placing the head on someone's feet is not enough. There should be such a great sense of ownership that you can say, "I leave myself completely." But who leaves? Can you leave – you who cannot leave anger, who cannot even give up smoking? Can you give yourself up completely? A man gives up smoking and tells all the world of his great effort and will-power and even then he is not fully successful. So to give yourself up completely is not a small effort. it is the greatest of efforts. It is the ultimate effort. There is no effort beyond this.

Question 3

ONE FRIEND HAS ASKED, "YOU SAY NOTHING IS COMPLETE, THEN HOW CAN THE VOID BE COMPLETE?"

If you had to attain the perfection of the void, you would never have attained it. The void is complete – it is, it is! You have just to stop filling yourself and you will suddenly realise that you are empty! There can be no completeness in this world of anything. Nothing is attained by man s actions.

Once the Sultan in whose service Nasruddin was, was displeased with him. He told him, "You are a perfect dolt!" Mulla replied, "Do not flatter me. Nobody is perfect."

However, if Emptiness too, had to be brought in, it would not be perfect. But the fact is, Emptiness is your nature. You have not to bring it about. It is. All you can do is to cover up what is, hide it, forget it. You cannot destroy it. You have not to attain the perfection of Emptiness. You have only to give up all efforts towards perfection. Then you will find that you have become empty.

Question 4

THE SAME FRIEND HAS ASKED: "IF THE VESSEL BECOMES EMPTY, WILL IT NOT BE DESTROYED?"

Now here the point to understand is, what Lao Tzu means by the vessel and what you mean. There is a difference here of language. We look upon the wall of clay that forms the vessel as the vessel. So when we buy a water-pot from the market, we pay for that clay which the potter has made. That is what the water-pot means to us. Now Lao Tzu means by the vessel, that emptiness within which is surrounded by the wall of clay. The wall of clay only forms the boundary of that emptiness which Lao Tzu calls the vessel.

And this boundary has to be made use of in order to fill the vessel. If it has to be kept empty only, these walls are not required.

Now think – why do we have to create this boundary? Why does the potter make a circular wall of clay? It is so that we can fill it with something. We cannot fill anything in emptiness. So we surround emptiness from all sides with matter, so that we can fill the empty space within. It will be the emptiness only that gets filled but we have first to form a base or else the water will flow out. Therefore we have to form the base and the wall of the vessel in order to hold the water in the empty space. within.

Now if the vessel is to be kept empty only, will you go to buy it in the market? Who would take the trouble of looking after an empty pot?

If the vessel is not to be filled, the walls become useless. They were made for a specific purpose – that of filling. In the same manner when a person decides to become empty, the walls of the body fall off. This is what we call – not reborn again.

Take it this way: There is an emptiness within us which is the soul. Our body is the vessel – a wall of clay. As long as we keep filling ourselves with desires, with hopes of reaching somewhere, with the ambition of attainment, of reaching a goal; as long as there are passions and desires within us the potter who makes our vessels will keep on making them again and again.

The day Buddha attained wisdom, he addressed his own self thus: "Oh the Potter of my mind, now you no longer need make any more pots. This is the last one you have made. I thank you for all the pots you made for me. Oh Mason, no longer will you have to build a house for me! For now the dweller no longer wishes to dwell within. I need a house no longer!"

Every time, it is our desire to fill ourselves with something that causes the body to be born. The day we are prepared to become empty, there will no longer be any need for the body. However, we commit the same mistake with the body as we do with the water-pot. We take the walls of the pot as the vessel and our own walls (body) as our self. We neither recognise the emptiness within us as to what it is, nor do we recognise the emptiness of the pot as to what it is. It is the space within that is important, for things are fitted within this space. You buy the pot on account of the very emptiness within it. Since you are eager to fill, the potter out of His compassion, forms the vessel.

When the surrender to the void takes place, the walls cannot be saved. Nothing happens with the falling of the vessel except that the space within the vessel and the space outside become one. There will be no barrier in between. The atman that was surrounded within by the vessel, becomes one with the Parmatman. You may call this moksha or nirvana or whatever you like. The vessel (body) then becomes redundant. when you want to store something you need the vessel. When you have nothing to store you do not buy a container. In the same way we need a body as long as we feel the need to fill it. When this need is no more, there is no question of the body.

Lao Tzu says that this emptiness is not to be created by you. You only create the vessel. The potter does not create the emptiness within the pot. He merely raises a wall on all sides of emptiness. Therefore it is so cheap; otherwise even so much of the Void is unattainable even with all the riches of the world! Not all the treasures of the world can create even that much of emptiness that is held within a pot. Emptiness is. No potter creates it.

Now when you take the pot from the potter's to your home, it is not the space that was in it in the potter's house that you find on reaching your house. The space changes with every step you take. The vessel remains the same, the space within changes; and the moment the vessel breaks, the space within merges with the space without.

Therefore, a very priceless statement that Buddha had made, was never understood. Invaluable statements are rarely understood. Buddha said, "Do not think it is the same atman that walks with you." This statement of his was never understood. Now as I told you: You buy the pot and start from the potter's house. You have not moved an inch and the space within the vessel changes. And this goes on changing till you reach your house, where the space within your house will fill the pot. But since you are only concerned with filling the vessel, the space within makes no difference to you.

So this statement of Buddha caused a lot of difficulty. Everyone thinks there is one particular atman that resides in each body – and that alone is the atman. Buddha says, "No. As you travel the atman changes. You are the container that travels and the atman is the empty space that fills the container."

Buddha says, "It is like a lamp you burn at night. When you extinguish the lamp in the morning you think it is the same flame you are putting off. But the flame you lighted in the evening was lost a long time ago. Each moment the flame dies and another takes its place – therefore the smoke. This happens so fast that there is no time-gap in the exit of one and entrance of the next flame.

"But when you put off the flame in the morning," Buddha says, "it is not the same." At best you may say, "Put off that flame that burns in place of the one we had lighted last evening." This flame that now burns, is a succession of the initial flame which died long ago, so also the other flames that followed it.

The flame however flows in the same series. Therefore Buddha says, "Atman is a series of Existence." Mind you, it is not a unit of Existence. The same atman that you possessed in your last life is not with you in this life. It is a different atman, of the same series though. Understand this.

For example, let us say we have lighted two lamps. They burn all night. In the morning when we put off lamp A, the flame of lamp B is not affected because A and B are apart from each other. Yet, A is not the same flame we lighted last evening. If we call this flame A1, then the flame that we extinguish in the morning will be A1000. The same goes for B. If the evening flame is B1, the morning flame will be B1000. A has its own series and B its own.

The flow of our births is also a series. It is Buddha who for the first time explained the Universe as a dynamic river-like flow. When the vessel breaks, it is not the atman that desired liberation that will be liberated; some atman in the series of consciousness will attain salvation. The series is one. There is no unit but a flow. Now scientists have also almost discovered this truth in the realm of matter. They say it is not correct to say 'atom', we must say 'event'. It is not correct to call an object an object, it is a flow of matter – Quantum.

Lao Tzu says, "Become empty!" The moment you are empty, the vessel will become useless. The vessel though, can last for some time for it has its own laws. You bring a pot home for filling it but on reaching home you change your mind. But your decision will not cause the pot to break. The pot has its own existence. You keep it in one place. It will remain for a long time. Then it will begin to crumble and break. This may take ten years or more perhaps. One thing is certain though: the day you decide not to fill the pot, it is certain you will no longer go and buy another pot. This one you have already brought, will not be affected by your becoming desireless. It will exist by its own momentum.

Thus Buddha attained Truth at the age of forty but died at the age of 80. His vessel lasted for forty years! Mahavira attained knowledge at the age of forty-two. He also died at about eighty. For forty years the vessel remains but now it is empty and it awaits its own time to disintegrate. Now if the vessel is not to be filled, why conserve it, why not break it and throw it away? This is a question that arises naturally. Then why do Buddha and Mahavira choose to live for such a long span of 40 years, when there is no desire within them?

If Buddha or Mahavira is questioned thus, they will say, "To break something, is also a desire." There is not even this much desire left within to get rid of the vessel. Now things are allowed to take their own course. The desire to break also is a desire. For that also, something will have to be done. This doing is an indication of yet some kind of attachment towards the vessel. It shows you are still in some sort of relationship with the vessel.

Buddha or Mahavira say, "We are now empty – that is alright. Now let the body live out its life according to what we had desired in our last birth." You go to the potter and ask for a pot that will last for 10 years. Now after years, you feel no desire to fill it but the pot has five more years to live out. Now you will not break this pot for you have paid for it. You will allow it to be and live out its life. It will fall when it falls by itself. Then you will do nothing to save it either.

Therefore Buddha partook of the poisoned food. It was absolutely bitter; pure poison, and he knew it. People questioned him how a person so alert (that he was known to be awake in his sleep also)

could not make out that the food was poison? Buddha said, "I knew perfectly well at the very first morsel." "Then why did you not spit it out, why did you not refuse to eat it?" They asked. Buddha replied, "The person who had cooked the food for me, would have been pained unnecessarily. He is a poor, lonely fellow. The food he had cooked was barely enough for me. He was so filled with joy that I found no reason to mar his happiness!" "But this could kill you!" They insisted.

"On my part, I am dead ever since desires have faded and passions have ended." The body lived by its own momentum and lasted as long as it was to. And if someone comes along and breaks this vessel, Buddha feels no cause to stop him. He will not break it himself but he will also not stop another from breaking it. But this vessel was the last. Such a consciousness does not go again to buy a vessel. He is not born again. Freedom from birth and death means only this: he who has decided to become empty, has no occasion to buy another vessel.

One question now remains.

Question 5

SOMEONE HAS ASKED, "MIND ALONE IS THE BARRIER ON ACCOUNT OF WHICH WE CANNOT STAND FACE TO FACE WITH THE SELF. HOW IS THIS MIND TO BE EMPTIED?"

Forever have we been asking this question. This question is wrong. Because it is wrong, whatever answers accrue, are of no use to us. To ask a correct question, is very difficult and to get the correct answer is even more difficult. If a correct question is asked, the correct answer is bound to follow. We always ask how to tame the mind, how to empty it.

We should ask only this: how not to fill the mind. The question is not how to empty it because empty it is! You have not to empty it. It is enough that you do the kindness not to fill it. But we are for ever busy trying to empty it and in the process we evolve such methods that eventually fill it more. Whatever you do, you will fill it more. So it is better to ask, how not to fill it.

We keep loading the mind all the twenty-four hours. The most intriguing part is, if we do not allow it to fill for 10 minutes, all that has been filled into it for thousands of years gets emptied out. The fact is, that which we fill, is empty and because we are continuously filling it, we are under the illusion that it is full. If we stop filling it, for even 10 minutes, all that is filled in it from thousands of births, falls away and the vessel becomes empty for it is a bottomless vessel.

But we are filling it incessantly. It is just as when a man keeps placing wheat in the grinding-wheel and the flour falls out below. Now one question is just as if this man would ask how to stop the flour! He is adding wheat at the top and wants to stop the flour from coming out. Now if he stops adding wheat for five minutes, the flour automatically stops forming. The grinding-wheel will become empty on its own.

The problem now is to see how we fill the mind. All the twenty-four hours this filling goes on. There is not a single day when we have not invented fresh desires. If you stop creating new desires and be with your old ones only, you will find one day that you have become empty. Try to halt with your desires of yesterday. This should not be difficult. If you had desired Rs.10 yesterday, desire Rs.10 only, today also. Then you will have stopped at yesterday. You will find yourself in difficulty within 24

hours. You will begin to feel empty. If you have to save your yesterday's desire for Rs.10, you will have to desire Rs.20 today. You will have to keep your desire alive by giving it food and water by way of additional desires. Then only can it exist.

If you halt for even a moment, it will be something like this: When you ride a cycle, you fall the moment you stop paddling, If you are on an ascent, you fall instantly, if you are on a slope, the cycle will run a while; but fall you will. Constant paddling is essential for cycling. The wheel of the mind also requires constant paddling. A moment's lapse can be dangerous – the cycle might fall.

Everyday we create new desires – everyday. We see someone's clothes, a new desire rises, we see someone's house, a new desire arises, we see someone's face and desire arises. Every moment some desire is kindled within. Become aware of this. Be aware of filling the mind and forget about emptying it. You will not be able to empty it – no one has been able to empty it. You give up your eagerness to fill it and one day you shall find, it has stopped filling! The flour no longer comes out of the hand mill and it is Lying empty! We must first investigate from which directions the mind gets filled and be alert towards these. Do not be in haste to stop filling. Merely watch with all alertness, how and from where this filling takes place.

Man is such, he fills his mind till the last breath in his body.

Nasruddin was bitten by a rabid dog. He did nothing about it for the first few days. People advised him to see a doctor since the dog was rabid. By the time he did go to the doctor, the poison had spread within him. The doctor thought it fit to tell him directly that he had contracted Hydrophobia and his case was beyond repair. Very soon he would go mad and then die. They were fearing that Nasruddin might panic but the Mulla said, "Never fear. Get me a paper and pencil." The doctor thought perhaps the Mulla wanted to write his will; or perhaps he wanted to write to his wife or his friends. They were however surprised to find not the slightest sign of anxiety on his face. He wrote for a full hour without once lifting his head. When at last he looked up. the doctor inquired kindly, "Were you making out your will Mulla? Or are you writing a letter?" "No", said the Mulla, "I am writing down the names of all those whom I am going to bite! Once I go mad, I shall not be able to do so."

And he told the doctor, "Do not feel jealous. You shall not be deprived of it. I have put your name first on the list."

This man Nasruddin gives a true portrayal of man as he is within. If a mad dog bites, the first reaction is, whom to bite! What was to happen has happened, now the question is whom to bite? Thus the mind keeps creating desires till the last breath.

Be conscious of the fact that you are filling the mind every moment. As you become more and more aware, you will come to realize how useless it is to fill the mind. All your life you failed to fill it. You have filled it in number of births before and yet it remained unfilled. You fill it here and it empties out there and yet this illusion of filling does not leave us, for we never notice that we are filling.

One more story of Nasruddin and I shall finish my talk:

A youth came up to Nasruddin and asked him what his device was to empty the mind. Nasruddin said, "Right now I am going to the well to fill water. Come along with me. Ask no further questions.

If you do I shall drive you away. I shall answer you on our return." Nasruddin picked up two buckets and proceeded towards the well. The youth followed him.

Nasruddin kept one bucket on the wall of the well. The youth was perplexed. This bucket had no bottom to it. It was a drum open at both ends. Now he was in a fix. This foolish Mulla had warned him not to talk and without water, he would refuse to go home. What was to be done? Anyhow, he thought it was best to wait and see.

Nasruddin drew water from the well and poured it into the empty drum on the wall of the well. All the water fell out as he poured. He drew another bucket and poured the same way, then again and again. "Wait!" exclaimed the youth, "I do not need to ask any more. Even if you offer me your advice, I do not want it but may I tell you something?" "Shut up!" said Nasruddin, "It invariably happens that the one who comes to learn becomes too eager to teach. You came as a disciple and you have now become a master! You dare to advise me? Don't you dare be impertinent! Stay where you are!"

The youth pleaded with him, "When will it fill? Just think, you have already poured three buckets into it and not a drop does it hold!" Nasruddin replied, "Have I taken a contract to keep in mind things that are wrong, when no one in the world does it? From birth to birth man fills and fills and it is as yet unfilled. Why, I have poured only three buckets! Be quiet!"

The youth became silent and watched. Nasruddin poured about ten buckets more. "Have some consideration!" The youth pleaded, "Just look up once!" "Why should I?" said Nasruddin. "It is not my business to see whether the bucket is full or not. I am performing my duty and my duty is to fill this bucket. I shall see how it does not fill!"

The youth bade him good-bye and ran away.

But he could not sleep the whole night. He kept awake wondering what kind of a man was this Nasruddin and what could he have meant? The more he thought the more he felt that there was a slight mistake. He should have waited longer. Could he still be at the well, taking out water to fill the bottomless drum? But Nasruddin left soon after him. The youth went to the well and found he was not there. He went to his house. Nasruddin was fast asleep. He woke him up and said, "What happened? Did you fill the bucket ultimately?" Nasruddin said, "You foolish fellow, I have left it on the well for you."

We are filling our minds from untold births but this mind refuses to be filled. Previous births aside, (for they are so old that they are forgotten) even in this life we are continually filling up our mind. And have you ever thought – whether even an iota of all that you filled in, remains within you? How many times you have been angry, how many times you have indulged in sex, what all you have done but is there any trace of it within? What is your wealth? The bucket is empty. And we keep asking – how the bucket is to be emptied?

The bucket is empty. It was never filled sc you have not to empty it. Kindly, learn to see yourself engrossed in this act of filling the bucket that is bottomless – time and again you lower it in the well and take it out.

Our question is just as if Nasruddin were to ask someone how the bottomless drum should be emptied. Where is the mind filled? The mind is empty. But we are so fiendishly engrossed in the act

of filling that we miss this point altogether. Try and observe this process of filling. Become aware of all that has been filled and that which has not been filled so far. If a person takes it upon himself not to fill the mind for a full day, he will find this mind was forever empty and it cannot be filled. So, do not ask the other way round. Do not raise an erroneous question. Wrong questions lead to wrong answers. The correct question is: how can we stop filling our minds, with all the things with which we fill them.

And how should we not fill means only this that we are required to be a little alert. If you know that the drum is open at both ends, would you get busy in filling it? The bucket will then fall off from your hands. You will laugh at the stupidity of all this. The emptiness has not got to be brought in. It is already within us.

The miracle is that we have managed to make that emptiness look filled in. It looks as if we are filled within. It is enough that we should awaken towards this illusion.

Enough for today, the rest tomorrow.

CHAPTER 16

Unbiased are the three – heaven, earth and the saint

2 November 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 5: SUTRA 1

NATURE

HEAVEN AND EARTH DO NOT ACT FROM (THE IMPULSE OF) ANY WISH TO BE BENEVOLENT; THEY DEAL WITH ALL THINGS AS THE DOGS OF GRASS ARE DEALT WITH. THE SAGE DOES NOT ACT FROM (ANY WISH TO BE) BENEVOLENT; THEY DEAL WITH THE PEOPLE AS THE DOGS OF GRASS ARE DEALT WITH.

From all the people who have known on this earth, Lao Tzu is matchless, he is unique.

A man of ordinary intellect can easily add any of his own ideas to Krishna's GITA. In the same manner, anything can be added to the words of Mahavira, Buddha or Christ; and it will be difficult to detect these. The statements of these saints do not fall contrary to the morals and understanding of the common man. This is why all the scriptures of the world have become interpolated. Each generation adds something new of its own. Thus it has not been possible to preserve the purity of these scriptures.

But Lao Tzu's book is one of those very few books on earth which has preserved its purity. Nothing can be added unto it. The reason is, only a person of the calibre of Lao Tzu can ever add anything to it. The things Lao Tzu talks of are so contrary and opposed to the general common understanding, that an ordinary man cannot add anything of his own. To add anything to his works, a man has to become like Lao Tzu.

This statement is also a typical statement of Lao Tzu. You must never have heard that saints are never compassionate. All that you have heard about saints goes to show that they are filled with compassion – and Lao Tzu says: "THE SAINT HAS NO WISH TO BE BENEVOLENT." Now to add anything to this statement is very difficult. Lao Tzu says, "SAINTS DEAL WITH US AS WE DEAL WITH DOGS OF GRASS." This seems very strange, therefore it needs to be understood. No one understood saints better than Lao Tzu.

Actually, what we say about saints is according to our understanding: and what Lao Tzu says about saints is according to the saint's understanding.

Let us understand this sutra from the very beginning. HEAVEN AND EARTH DO NOT ACT FROM (THE IMPULSE OF) ANY WISH TO BE BENEVOLENT. Nature is devoid of all compassion, then be this the nature of heaven or of earth or whether it is on the level of the body or of the spirit. Nature is not benevolent. This does not mean that nature is heartless. This is our common understanding that that which is not compassionate must needs be cruel and heartless. But Nature is neither. It is neither benevolent towards anyone nor hard on anyone.

In fact, nature does not worry about you. It is not concerned with whether you exist or not. Tomorrow if you die, the skies will shed no tears, nor will the earth cry. When you were not there, the earth never felt your absence. Today, your presence makes no difference to the earth or the skies. Nature is oblivious of your presence. The rains will come as they do, the sun will shine and the flowers will bloom just as they always do. The day you die, flowers will bloom just the same. And your death will not cause any change in the coolness of the moon, nor will it change the course of the clouds in the skies. Your being or non-being is irrelevant to them. Nature does not even know that you exist.

But we are not aware of nature in this way.

The nature we know, is a product of our own imagination. If I am unhappy the moonlight appears sad to me; but the moonlight is never sad. Perhaps some lover meets his beloved in the same moonlight and sings songs of joy. So the same moonlight proves a source of joy to one and appears sad to another. It is quite possible that at one place, the moon seems to shed tears and at another, it causes flowers to bloom.

But neither do flowers bloom in moonlight nor does the moon become sad. The moonlight is oblivious of my presence or of anybody else's. It will be the same whether we exist or not.

When Lao Tzu says that nature is not benevolent, what he means is, do not spread your palms before nature unnecessarily. No mercy is obtained either from the skies or the earth. Do not fold your hands before a temple or a mosque. Do not pray to God with the hope that your prayers will bring about a change. No incantations of praise make any difference and even abuse makes no difference. Praise is meaningful only where abuse also is meaningful.

If my invectives unsettle God, my praise of Him is bound to be effective. And it God is displeased it I do not pray unto him, then my praise is hound to melt His heart and persuade him.

If I can induce God to be compassionate then He can be made to be cruel also. Then God does not remain God but a puppet in our hands.

Lao Tzu says, "Things are just the other way round. We are puppets in his hands." If he is benevolent, we could play with him. Therefore Lao Tzu says that nature is not benevolent nor does he say that nature is cruel. The cruelest of men can be compassionate, then be it Tamer or Genghis or Hitler, there are weak spots in their hearts also. He can love someone and he can also be pained at the suffering of someone. There may be a difference of degree. His limit of compassion may be restricted and his limit of hard-heartedness may be larger. It is the other way round in the case of a compassionate man but the most compassionate of men has also a strain of cruelty within him. His compassion also has a limit. Therefore you will find that the heart of the kindliest of persons has a hard core within – there ale stones somewhere within his heart too!

This is inevitable, for whatever we know in this life is split into two. I he man who loves, hates also. The man who is wrathful, can also forgive. And as morning is followed by even tide, so do these dualities come and go across the mind of a man.

Lao Tzu says, "Nature is non-dual." Nature follows the law of one-ness. There everything is similar. And there is never any fluctuation in this law. Nature is neither kind nor cruel. It neither punishes the bad nor rewards the good. This means that whatever we do and whatever we attain is the result of our doing. Nature has no hand in it.

If a thorn pricks my foot, it is not because nature is eager to pierce thorns within my feet, on the contrary, it shows that I am keen to walk on thorny ground. And if flowers rain over my head, it is not because the skies were showering them on me but that I sought out the trees that scattered flowers. This is coincidence and this search is mine alone, whether it was for thorns or for flowers, or whether it was for invectives or for honour. And whether I enjoy heaven or rot in hell or whether there is music all around me, it is entirely my doing.

Nature however, is impartial. It is not interested in you at all. It should not be or else there would be disorder.

Lao Tzu says, "This is nature's arrangement that it is not interested in you at all." If Nature was interested in you, you will not fail to take advantage of it and even misuse it. If it were so, man would keep it under his control. Just because it is not interested in you, it is beyond your control.

If your prayers are fulfilled, it is not because someone has heard them; rather, it is because you have done something else to fulfil them. If your prayers go unanswered, it is not because God is displeased with you; rather, it is because they are merely prayers and you have done nothing to back them up with. If prayers give you strength, this strength too, comes from within you, it is your own strength. If whilst returning from the temple after prayers, you feel yourself filled with energy, it means your resolve is more awakened. If your legs feel strong and your steps become firm, the strength has come from inside of you. The thought of praying in the temple is entirely yours and so also the result. It is entirely of your own making and can happen even in wilderness where there is no sign of any temple.

This is exactly why it sometimes happens that a mere stone fulfils your prayers, whereas at times even the presence of men of the stature of Lao Tzu or Mahavira or Buddha, fail to be effective.

The other is not in the picture at all. The matter rests entirely with you and to make this very clear, Lao Tzu has said that nature is not benevolent.

This statement sounds very harsh and cruel in a way, for then we feel helpless. All our strength oozes out of our hands if someone says nature is not kind. If I fall in a pit, no voice from heaven will warn me beforehand. This seems very hard and affects our mind.

And because of the jolt that this statement gives to the mind, Lao Tzu is outside of the understanding of many people, for he gives no promises to make good your incapabilities. It is very difficult to form a religion after Lao Tzu. Religions can only be formed if you defects can be exploited. If you are told that God wants just what you want, that God is willing to give exactly what you desire, then religions are formed.

No religion could be formed after Lao Tzu. He is one of his own kind, who has no church, no order, no religion behind him.

How could this be possible? For Lao Tzu says, "Nature is not benevolent." Prayers and praises and even God is nipped in the bud. You stand alone. We are so afraid of being alone that we are even willing to take a false companion to ease the mind. If I am alone on the high seas with not a soul near me, even then I can dream of someone beside me and put my mind to rest. That is why perhaps, man dreams. Not only does he dream whilst asleep but also when he is awake!

What we look upon as religion is nothing but our vast dreams spread out. We see in them only that which we want to see and we get it cheap! A man eats once a day, or goes about in a loin-cloth, or goes about naked, or he goes and rings the temple-bells daily and feels that heaven is assured for him.

No – Nature is not compassionate.

But who are the people who crave and beg for compassion? Surely they are the wrong type of people. The right kind of person never asks for compassion. He will spurn it even if he is given for that which is obtained out of pity, is never attained. It never can become a part of us. That which is created by our own effort, that alone is our possession.

Lao Tzu maintains that nature is non-compassionate. Then is it cruel? No, it is not cruel either. Nature is only unprejudiced towards you. It is feeling-less towards you. It takes no sides for or against you. It is our way of thinking, therefore we always think in duality – whether nature is our friend or foe. Nature is neither. It does not keep your account. You are not accountable in its eyes. There is no loss in nature due to your absence and no profit in your presence. Our being is like a line drawn over water. Just as it makes no difference to the water whether the line is drawn or not. This means non-compassionate, meaning thereby, it has no feeling towards you.

This in one way is very harsh and in another way a very joyful matter, for if nature takes sides there is bound to be partiality. Then even there somebody will be able to deceive. Then even a sinner will pull strings and go to heaven, while the virtuous ones may rot in hell. If there is the slightest feeling in Existence, the element of choice will step in.

This is why all religions of the world that stand on selection and on the theory of nature's compassion, stand on judgment. If you ask a Muslim what will happen to a non-Muslim, he will say that the poor fellow will go astray. There is no way without being a Muslim. If you ask a Christian what will happen

to a non-Christian, he will say that a person who does not follow Christ will keep groping in the dark. God sent his son on earth. Those who follow him, will be saved and those who do not, shall perish.

If God has any son, there is bound to be confusion; and if it is advantageous to speak in favour of the Son of God and if even Existence takes his side, then there is bound to be difficulty.

No, Lao Tzu says, "Nature has no sons." Nature has no one of its own, for no one is alien to nature also. Nature accepts no one for it denies nobody. Nature takes no sides and this is a matter of joy in a way. Therefore, each one attains according to his strength and ability for there is no partiality. So if I attain hell it will be of my own making and if I attain heaven, it too will be of my own making. I cannot hold anyone responsible. I cannot therefore thank anyone or abuse anyone that it was because of him that I attained what I attained.

The meaning of this statement of Lao Tzu is: "Ultimately, I am responsible. The ultimate responsibility is mine".

Therefore Lao Tzu's second statement seems even more cruel. He says, "HEAVEN AND EARTH DO NOT ACT FROM (THE IMPULSE OF) ANY WISH TO BE BENEVOLENT." Their dealings with all creatures is like a person's attitude towards a dog made out of grass. And how will you behave towards a dog made out of grass? If he wags his tail, you will not feel happy for it is only a dog of grass. If he barks you will not be frightened for you know he is only made of grass. This dog will not prompt you to react in any direction. You will neither run away when he barks, nor will you feel happy when he wags his tail.

But if you have the slightest indication that he is a genuine dog, you will react. Even if the dog is of grass but you take him to be real, you are bound to respond. Then you will feel happy when he wags his tail.

Man keeps dogs just for this reason for it is a difficult task to find a man who would wag his tail at all that you do. A man keeps a dog. When he comes home, tired from his work, it is not certain whether the wife will greet him with her tail wagging, more so after he has wedded her. But the dog is bound to wait for him at the gate and wag his tail when he sees him!

Mulla Nasruddin's friend told him one day, "I am in a fix. As long as I was not married, the dog used to bark at me and my wife used to bring my slippers but now things are entirely changed. Now the wife barks and the dog brings my slippers." Nasruddin says, "But I see no difference. The services are the same. The work done is the same, only the workers have changed. You get your slippers and also the usual bark, then what is your worry?"

Man can be gratified by the tail of a dog. He can be frightened by his bark also. The same reactions can be obtained from a grass-dog if you do not know it is made of grass. The reason is, we do not live in reality, we live in our conceptions. My conceptions are the realities of my world.

In this peerless statement, Lao Tzu says, "NATURE DEALS WITH US AS IF WE ARE DOGS OF GRASS." It is neither directed nor motivated by us. There is a very deep insight in this statement. We are dogs of grass in the eyes of nature, not only metaphorically but also in actuality. And what more can we mean to nature than dogs of grass?

As far as we are concerned, we are statues stuffed with grass. If the grass is removed from within us, nothing remains. Our bodies are mere grass – a conglomeration of food, water, bones and fibre. And we have not the slightest idea that there is anything besides body within us! We are the body. Open the body and there is nothing but this 'grass' within. The scientists say that the human body is worth only about 4 to 5 rupees. There is some aluminium, some iron, some copper, some phosphorous. 80

That which we call life, a scientist will say is the evolution of vegetable. Even today, our life is entirely dependent on this. One man consumes one ton of grass in one year in order to subsist. We have to keep taking in grass all the time. Different people take grass in different forms but it is grass all the same. That is our fuel, that is our existence, that is our body.

It is not necessary to be annoyed with Lao Tzu when he calls us dogs of grass. We too are not aware whether we are anything more than this. That Nature knows us as such, is reasonable but that we too, know ourselves as this only, is not worthy. But we have no idea whether there is anything besides the body within us. That there is a soul, we have heard but fail to understand for we can only understand that which comes within our Comprehension.

But in other ways also we are like grass. Have you seen the scarecrow that a farmer makes? He stuffs it with grass and puts an old pot on its head. It helps to frighten the birds away. The birds take him to be real and so are frightened and fly away. If you come upon it on a dark night, perhaps it can frighten you too. Your feelings get projected on the scarecrow and cause you to react.

Now also, we are motivated by nothing more than figures stuffed with grass. If a beautiful body attracts me, have I ever thought that it is the grass that attracts me? If I am eager to kill someone, do I realize that I am only waiting to run a knife through grass? Someone's presence delights me and someone's absence fills me with sorrow. Have I then realized that figures of grass can bring about such a wave of emotions within me merely by their presence or non-presence?

Lao Tzu says, "Nature has nothing to do with you. It only knows you as dogs of grass." You do not exist, you are merely a house of cards.

Now if we are willing to understand Nature to be such, what Lao Tzu says further is even more difficult to understand. He says, "The saints, those who know, they too are not compassionate." Saints have always been known and believed to be compassionate. We say they are the ultimate in compassion. Mahavira's devotees said he was the symbol of forgiveness, Buddha's devotees said he was the last word in compassion. The devotees of Jesus proclaim that he was born out of compassion for mankind, to bring them out of pain and misery. The devotees of Krishna say that whenever the world is filled with sorrow and grief, Krishna will come and liberate all. So up to now this is our conception of a saint – all-compassion!

But Lao Tzu says, "Saints are non-compassionate, for he is a saint who has united himself with the intrinsic essence of Nature." Otherwise he is not a saint. Then if Existence is non-compassionate, how can a saint be compassionate? The meaning of the word saint is: One who has attained the Truth of existence and become one with it.

Then it Truth itself is non-compassionate how can a saint be otherwise? The saint is one with Truth.

Saints make no sacrifices. This immediately brings up the illusion that then they must be harsh and cruel. No, they are neither harsh nor cruel. They are neither harsh nor humble. They are beyond the pairs of opposites. If they act in a certain manner, it is not because they are hard on you or because they think kindly of you. They do only that which their Nature silently bids them do. Their actions are spontaneous and natural. You go to a saint and put your head on his feet and he puts his hand on your head. This is not out of any compassion towards you. It can also be that he might push you away. Then too it is not necessary that he is harsh on you.

When Rinzai approached his Guru for the first time, it was a well known fact among the people there, that the Guru was a very harsh man. Generally such rumours are wrong for the people have no idea whether a saint is kind or cruel. So when Rinzai prepared to go to him, they tried to stop him. "Do not go to him, he is very harsh," they all counselled him. "Let me go and find out for myself," Rinzai told them. "It is quite possible you may be wrong. This has often happened with me that the person I go to meet turns out to be exactly the opposite of what people tell me."

Rinzai went. He found the Guru sitting by his door with a staff in his hand. Zen fakirs always kept a staff with them. Shankara's sannyasins were also made to carry a staff with them. No one knows why, for the concept of a saint in India has always been linked with compassion. So Shankara's sannyasins, though they carry a staff, they never make use of it. The Zen fakirs of Japan are the only order of sannyasins who have made full use of the staff.

The Guru sat with the staff in his hand. Rinzai approached him and bent down to touch his feet. "Stop!" The Guru shouted. "Answer my question first, then only are you eligible to touch my feet!" "What is the question?" Rinzai asked respectfully. "First of all let me tell you," said the Guru, "whether your answer is yes or no in both the cases this staff shall descend on you. So think first." Rinzai replied, "Let me touch your feet first and let the ritual of the staff be done with. Then we shall talk." Saying thus, he put his head on the fakir's feet and requested him to hit him with the staff.

The Guru kept his staff down and said, "Perhaps I shall have no need to beat you." "Why?" asked Rinzai. "Whoever comes begging for my compassion my being becomes harsh towards him. I am not present, it is not my doing, it happens so. No sooner a person pleads for mercy, my being becomes harsh and cruel. Where there is the sense of ownership, my being gets filled with compassion. But," he continued, "the fact is, I am outside both of these. Nothing is of my own doing. I am ready and willing for whatever happens. If my hand picks up the staff, I beat. Right now, the hand has left the staff, so I have let it go."

In fact, saints are natural. Understand what I mean by natural: without any cause, they become one with whatever their being bids them do from within. They are choiceless. They cannot be compassionate, they cannot show mercy. They cannot also be cruel. They however, appear to be kind but that is only our understanding of them and at times they seem unduly harsh – that again, is our understanding. Our understanding is the understanding of an insane mind and very rarely, (if ever) this understanding turns out true.

A friend came to me two months ago. He has been coming to me for the last five years or so. Every time he comes to me, he would say, "If I do not have your darshan for 2-4 days, I become very restless." This he told me so many times, that I should believe it was the truth. So many times he repeated this that I should have accepted the fact that it could not be otherwise. Many times though, I felt like confiding my doubts to him that I suspected the contrary.

This time be came after two months! "May I ask you a question?" I asked him, "You say you become restless if you do not see me for two or four days. Or is it that I become restless if I do not have your darshan for two or four days?" "What is this you say?" He asked. "It has never ever occurred to me this way." It is not necessary that he should think of it. We are so clever at deception. "Still, give it a thought." I told him. "The question does not arise." He said, "The day I cannot see you or talk about you or read your books, my mind becomes very restless."

Fifteen days later he came again. He came with three other friends. I looked at the three and ignored him. I talked to these three as if they alone were in the room. He touched my feet and looked at me. I looked as if I was unaware of his presence. He became restless. He went and sat in a corner. He was a different man altogether. Everything about him had changed. I should have inquired how his wife was and how his son was and his daughter. He was under the illusion that he had come for darshan. So today also, he had my darshan but I did not have his. He did not touch my feet before leaving. When he closed the door after him that day, I knew it was for the last time. He will never enter that door again.

He never came. Someone told me he has thrown my books away. Now he is getting on famously without me. Not only that, he cannot rest till he abuses and scandalizes me before a few people every day. What has happened to this man?

For years he swore he was restless without me. I knew all the time that the actual thing was not my darshan. I do not say that he did this on purpose. He was totally oblivious of this. We are such masters at deception that we even deceive ourselves. We do not let our own selves know what is happening within us. In those ten minutes when I did not give him attention, so much of rubbish poured out from within him, it is difficult to tell. The atmosphere in the room became heavy and oppressive when he left.

Very recently, another incident took place. A lady came to see me. She sat with me for about 10 minutes. Her mind was filled to brim. She gave vent to all the hatred, malice, jealousy that was within her. She relieved herself of her burden. Soon after, a youth entered. He looked around restlessly and said, "I am feeling very strange! What is the reason?" I told him, "Do not fear. A woman was here before you and she has spilt some rubbish. The air has become a little heavy for the vibrations of her malady are within this room. Within five minutes the room will clear again."

It is not the body alone that throws out refuse. There is much more refuse within our minds. It is not the body alone that ejects excreta and urea. The same has also to be ejected from the mind. This is why you cannot be filled with love towards a person for all the twenty-four hours. You will have to show disgust towards him or else, how will you throw out the refuse? As we provide a bathroom in each house, so also we have to arrange disgust in our mind, where all the refuse can collect. The refuse collects. Then it has to be thrown out. This is why there is divorce not only between a husband and wife but also between Guru and disciple, between two friends, between father and son. We do not take this into account but these do happen.

Now when we are filled with love towards a person, for him we become without a toilet. Our whole house becomes a sitting room for him. Now where is the toilet to go? We shall have to hide it. By and by the sitting room will begin to contract and the toilet will expand till one day the whole house will turn into a toilet and there will be a sitting room no more. This happens for this is inevitable in the case of a mind filled with duality.

Lao Tzu says, "The saints do not live in duality (dwandwa). They love no one and therefore they despise no one." Let us understand this well. Our reasoning is different. We say, "Since I love you, I do not despise you." This logic is absolutely false. Whenever a person says, "I love you," the other part that he leaves unsaid is, "I despise you." This other part is inevitable logic but we hide it. Later on we have to reap the fruits thereof.

Lao Tzu says, "They love no one for they hate no one." They are kind to no one for they are not harsh or cruel to anyone. They forgive no one for they are never angry with anyone. Understand these pairs of opposites (dwandwa) well. They are the two sides of the same coin and they go along together always, no matter how much you hide the other side. How long will you hide it? Then boredom results. You become curious to see what you have been hiding; and that which you have seen a lot, you wish to see no more. Then you have to change the side (of the coin). The end of a lover is that he is filled with disgust, and when friendship is strong, enmity is born. If the friendship is not very intense, it can work for a long period.

People come and ask me, "So and so used to love you so much, he had such faith in you and why has he now gone against you?" To this I reply, "It is entirely because of this reason." This they cannot understand for they think that one who loves cannot go against you. "I do not love you half as much but I have not gone against you," they say. To this also I reply, "It is entirely because of this reason." If you understand this statement, you shall be able to understand Lao Tzu.

Lao Tzu says: "The saint is beyond the opposites." So if you feel that Mahavira is kind to you, it is entirely your understanding. Mahavira is not responsible for this. And if you feel Mahavira looks at you with eyes that are sharp and burning, that also is entirely your understanding. This is purely your interpretation. Mahavira has nothing to do with it. The saint never divides himself in two.

But Lao Tzu also says, "Saints deal with men as if they were stuffed dogs." A saint looking upon man as a stuffed dog! The saint is always believed to be seeing God within all creatures – not only men – that he should see man thus! He should not even look upon a stuffed dog that way! He should see God even in a dog – that is what we have heard!

What is this that Lao Tzu says? He is saying quite the opposite thing. But this is not contrary. It is the other side of the same matter. The man who sees God within you, also sees the grass-stuffed dog within you. Try to understand this: In you I say In Existence, he will see nothing but God. But you are not Existence, you are only a bundle full of hay, a knot, a complex. You are not man – you are a complex of illnesses. The man in you lies hidden behind the complex.

When the saint says he sees God everywhere, he puts aside this complex and speaks – he puts you aside, you who are a bundle of maladies. When he says: "This is," he is not addressing you but he is addressing that which is beyond you, that whom you have never met. You hear him speak and you think he means you. You are merely a bundle of hay – a complex of maladies and this complex the saint looks upon as a stuffed-dog.

This complex is our ego. That is what 'I am'. With that it feels to us that 'I am'. The saint does not think this to be of any worth. But this ego finds ways and means to be of consequence. It can lie at the feet of a saint or it can strut arrogantly outside in the market-place with the knowledge that it was 'I' who could reach the saint's feet – I! When others stood helplessly and looked on, it was I

alone who had the singular honour of touching his fee; and when others were craving for a single look, I had the honour of his being a glance! How filled with love those eyes were – but these very eyes would turn into stone some day for they are the product of your imagination.

This is why people like Lao Tzu did not appeal to the masses. The masses are only attracted towards those who feed their ego, by those who are adept in the art of seducing their ego. Salesmanship, is what pays with human beings. Thousands of books have been written on this in America in the last twenty years. They teach people – 'HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE'. They teach them how to trap the wife or the husband, how to coax customers into buying things. They show thousands of ways in which man's ego can be flattered.

If the ugliest of woman is capable of enticing your ego, Mumtaz-Mahal and Noorjahan would become worthless. The beauty of a woman lies more in her power of persuasion than in her looks. This is why ugly women at times perform the impossible whereas the beautiful ones still stand in the queue! Many a time an ordinary person becomes a powerful leader whereas no one even looks at a man of extraordinary intelligence. What is the secret? The lesser man knows the art of feeding the other's ego.

Nothing is ever captured or sold in this world until you master the art of flattering the other's ego. And what can be easier than this? The other is always ready to succumb to your flattery. In fact he eagerly awaits it. You take one step towards him and he is ready to fall ten times.

A person like Lao Tzu cannot be influential for he says that your ego is nothing more than a stuffed dog!

Confucius came to meet Lao Tzu. He found there was no place to sit – no chair, no high platform. Confucius was a very disciplined person. He looked all around the room to find a place to sit. Lao Tzu said, "Sit wherever you like, it makes no difference to the room. I am sitting here since a long time and the room has not looked at me even once." Confucius sat down but he was very ill at ease for he had never sat directly on the floor before. Lao Tzu said, "The body has sat down. You too, sit down." The ego is standing erect behind him. Lao Tzu says, "Since you have sat down, let the ego sit also."

Confucius sat down but he did not hear a word of what Lao Tzu had to say. If a hundred words are spoken, ninety-nine will in all probability go unheard even in the case of all of you.

Napoleon Hill was a clever thinker of America. He says, "If you want to make your way within a person, flatter his ego. Then he will be ready to hear you. Otherwise he will not he prepared even to hear you." You come to me and I ask you as soon as you enter what thoughts are going on within you and if you give an honest reply, you will find your mind occupied with all kinds of thoughts. Now if I want to penetrate within you, I shall have to break this flow of thoughts. Then only can my words reach within you. Otherwise your eyes will look at me, your ears will hear me but the internal flow of thoughts will keep on.

Napoleon Hill says, "If you want to break the inner flow of thoughts of a person, fan his ego. Then he will immediately be prepared to listen to you." He has written in his memoirs that a man hovers around four things – name, wealth, desire and age. All these are parts of the ego. If you want to make an entrance into someone's heart, you can begin from any one of these.

He (Hill) has got into a bus. The bus was moving fast and it was raining heavily outside. He had to get down at stand No.55. He went up to the driver and said, "Please tell me when stand 55 comes, I have to get down there. It is a dark night and it is raining hard. I do not want to miss my stop." The driver replied, "How can I remember? Besides it is raining hard and the night is dark. Shall I keep my eyes on the traffic or on the stands? Please look out for yourself."

Had it been another man, he would have quietly taken his seat but Napoleon wanted to try out his experiment. "I was only trying to tell you," he said, "that there is a big pot-hole near stand 55 and you should be careful." He then went and took his seat. When stand 55 came, the driver promptly stopped. "Where is the pot-hole?" he asked Hill, "There is no pot-hole. I only wanted to make a hole in the flow of your thoughts." And he got off the bus.

If the thought of death grips you, the ego gets a jolt, if the thought of wealth or status grips you, the ego falls and the stream is broken and an opening is made. Then you can penetrate within.

But how can a person like Lao Tzu enter within you? He talks neither of wealth nor status or standing; nor does he talk of desires. He will only say, "You are a dog stuffed with hay". Who will listen to such a man?

After returning from Lao Tzu, do you know what Confucius told his disciples? He said, "Do not ever go to that old man. He is not a man but a lion! He seems ready to eat you up. I have never come across a man more harsh than him. I was frightened of him! I did not catch a word of what he said – not that I did not hear him well. I did not hear him at all! It was a difficult task to look this man in the eye."

Lao Tzu is neither compassionate nor harsh. But Confucius found him harsh, for a great thinker like him – he was much better known than Lao Tzu. It was Confucius who created China. He was well established. Even the king revered him and gave him all honour. They got up hastily and took him to his seat when he arrived – and this old fakir tells him, "Sit down. the room won't mind!" His mind closed even more.

Saints are non-compassionate. They are so one with Existence that it is Existence that speaks from within them. It is Existence that carries out all their dealings. It is Existence that bids then stand or sit. The saint does not exist in himself. If this is kept in mind, it will be easy to understand this seemingly strange sutra of Lao Tzu.

Would that we can see saints this way, then our entire concept of saints will change completely. Then we shall see differently, think differently.

But we take our own particular angle of vision when we go to a saint. We do not go to a saint to understand him. We go to investigate our own point of view. If we hear him, then too we sort out the things which we deem are correct. What does this mean? It means, what saying of the saint agrees with you. If it agrees with you then it is correct otherwise not. Then this man is wrong. You make yourself the criterion. Therefore your meeting with a saint never takes place.

The saint Lao Tzu talks of, you shall never meet. You are however, bound to meet saints who distribute sweets! He will place a candy on your tongue and you will become tremendously happy.

The grass-dog will wag his tail in appreciation and say, "This is a saint!" He will spray water on your head and bless; you that success is bound to be yours. He will give you some talisman, some mantra to win your case in court, to win your lost love. Such saints are plenty in the world but one like Lao Tzu is very hard to come by.

He will not come your way unless you are prepared to look upon yourself as a stuffed-dog. And he who is ready and willing to look upon himself as such, finds such a saint right on his door-step! He does not need to set out in search of him for Existence begins to reveal itself – to us its mysteries, its secrets – according to our own preparation! Everything rests on our receptivity.

Lao Tzu points to that which is the most important part of our preparation. This is not merely metaphysical. Lao Tzu's suggestion is to make us understand what we should do if we want to meet such a saint. We shall have to be very clear about ourselves – as to what we are.

If it becomes clear to my understanding as to what I am, the knot that has formed within me, will dissolve in no time. But the trouble is, this does not occur to us.

Recently a mother had come to me all the way from New York with her daughter. There was a lot of struggle between the two. The mother was under the impression that she loved her daughter very much. She had come two months before also. Then she had told me that she loved her children so much that she would even give her life for them. I told her to think over again for this was not natural. She insisted that she loved her three daughters so, it would be hard for me to imagine! I again told her to think it over.

At this she began to cry and beat her breast. She said, "You are cruel, take back your words, for I really and truly love my children." The louder she screamed the more adamant I became. "Whom are you trying to convince by this – me or your own self?" I asked her. "If you love them, you love them. There the matter should end. There is no need to make an exhibition like this! Since you cry and scream so much and beat your breast I tell you again. Look within and try to understand yourself. Your crying will have no effect on me; but it is bound to affect you."

If you want to love you must know how to cry and beat your breast or else how can others know what you feel? The louder you cry the better you can convey your feeling and that is why women can easily prove that they love whereas a man finds it difficult.

"This will not work with me," I told her.

So this time she brought her eldest daughter along with her. She said, "Now look at us." I did and within fifteen days as much enmity as can exist between two individuals, manifested itself in full between these two.

Enmity exists between a mother and daughter, society, family, hides it. As the daughter grows into a young girl, the mother starts becoming her enemy. This is absolutely natural. This is our animal heritage. As the son grows up and becomes a young man, the father is filled with jealousy. This is not a matter to be discussed. All fathers and all sons know it. As the boy grows up, he tries to push the father out. Verily, he has to make a place for himself. Looking at the daughter in the full bloom of youth, the mother feels she lost hers on account of her. No one is the cause for loss of youth.

Without children too, she would have become old. But she does not think of this. Every man that enters the house first looks at the young girl and then at the old mother. This is very painful.

The custom of sending married daughter off to her husband's home was initiated by women and since the woman always has her way, the man had to give in. Daughters had to be sent away from the house. Even if the father takes more interest in his daughter, which is very natural, the mother is filled with jealousy. Then the daughter no longer looks a daughter in the mother's eyes but a sheer woman.

For fifteen days I tried my best to bring out all their maladies from within. I instigated them both against each other. Their fever reached such a pitch that they were ready to fall on each other's throat. Then I made them both sit with me and told them to bring out whatever was within them. Then the disease that came out of them was such no mother or a daughter could ever imagine. This is so within each mother and each daughter. But we suppress these feelings and dress our wounds. We spread flowers without when there is nothing but dirt and filth within.

Lao Tzu says, "You are a complex of this filth and nothing more. We consider it no more than a stuffed dog and neither do we forgive nor show any compassion, nor harshness towards them.

"We say only this that it is useless and irrelevant. It is worthless. As long as this complex does not dissolve, that which is priceless within, does not get an opportunity to manifest itself. Until all the filth and dirt from within is thrown out, the gold within cannot be purified."

You will be shocked to know the jealousy, the disgust, the invectives the mother and daughter expressed against each other. So much so, that I found myself in a fix. I was afraid that if their problem is not solved quickly – they had to return to New York soon – there would be chaos. Then I had to carry out processes to remove all their hatred. There they sat – the mother and daughter – and they said such things to each other as a daughter has never ever openly told her mother or a mother, her daughter, but which they both have always thought about each other from times immemorial.

You could never dream a mother telling her daughter, "You are my enemy. You always try to snatch away the man who tries to love me." And the daughter says, "You are a harlot!" When the mother asked, "Do you hate me?" She said, "I do, I do, I hate you, this very moment!" The mother said, "You are nobody to me. I cannot bear the very sight of you!"

When all this invective came out in an hour's time, I told them to sit silently with their eyes closed. Thus they sat for 5 minutes and both were crying. Then they both clung to each other. That night they slept on one cot. The next day the mother said, "It was our honeymoon night. After years, I was able to make love to my daughter again." But I told her to beware for this love will only gather hatred. Wherever there is (dwandwa) duality, we tend to gather the opposite.

Lao Tzu says, "The saint is beyond the opposites. He is apart from both of them. They are neither harsh nor compassionate."

Enough for today, the rest tomorrow.

CHAPTER 17

Oneness in the opposites and installation into the void

3 November 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 5: SUTRA 2

MAY NOT THE SPACE BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH

BE COMPARED TO A BELLOWS?

IT IS EMPTIED, YET IT LOSES NOT ITS POWER;

IT IS MOVED AGAIN, AND SENDS FORTH AIR THE MORE.

MUCH SPEECH TO SWIFT EXHAUSTION LEAD WE SEE;

YOUR INNER BEING GUARD, AND KEEP IT FREE.

Life is constructed on many intra-contradictory bases. Life is not what it appears. Behind the apparent elements are elements that are not visible and which are absolutely contrary.

But we never think of the opposite.

When we look at birth, we get no hint of death. If any person talks of death when a birth has taken place, we brand him as an insane. But death is always hidden behind birth and he who knows, sees death at once with birth.

Now this is just as when someone is on his death-bed, we never think of his birth; but after every death, a birth cycle starts. When we see a beautiful face, it never occurs to us that it may one day

turn ugly. When someone is young, we do not hear the foot-falls of age behind the beauty and vigour of youth. When someone is successful in something, remember failure is close by; but this never occurs to us. When someone is placed on the highest pedestal, we are never reminded that one day he will fall to the ground. We do not think this way at all.

Existence hides the opposite within itself. Therefore, the wise one is he who is capable each moment of seeing the opposite also. He who sees death in life, light in darkness, failure in success, ugliness in beauty, the hatred behind love and scandal behind praise. he alone is wise.

Lao Tzu here gives us the most profound news about these opposites. What is the lower-most base of the opposite?

Have you seen the bellows in a blacksmith's shop? Lao Tzu has given an example of the bellows. He says, "When the bellows become empty of air, do not think it has become powerless." The truth is, that the strength of the bellows lie in its emptiness only. There is no strength in filled bellows. The blacksmith empties the bellows, in order to fill it with strength. it is the power of emptiness within the bellows, that sucks the air in. Bellows that are already full have no power left to suck in air. It is already so full that no more can be filled into it. It is at the last point of fulness. Now it is powerless but when it is empty it is powerful and has the strength to suck in air.

In the moment of death, the bellows of a person are emptied out. Now life can again appear. The breath within you at the time of death was pressed out now you can once again take in from the refreshing breath of life. Have you ever thought that you are only able to suck in the life-giving breath of existence, when you have breathed out? When you breathe out, you are powerful and not empty. You are only empty of breath but your ability to suck in life increases.

Lao Tzu says, "When the bellows are empty, do not think they are weak. It will suck the air in and also throw it out. The emptiness is a step towards fullness." But we see mere emptiness in emptiness and only fullness in fullness.

Lao Tzu says: "Emptiness is a step towards fullness, and fulness is the preparation for being empty again." These are the right and the left feet of existence. Life cannot go on on one foot only. The breath that comes in is just as much one leg of life as the breath that comes out. If we observe our breathing we shall find that the outgoing breath is synonymous with death and the incoming breath is synonymous with life. Those who have studied the science of respiration, say that we die with every breath and are reborn again.

Death, however, does not mean becoming powerless. It means only this: that we are ready again to become powerful. We have thrown the old away and our capability to fill in the new has become sharp and clear.

Lao Tzu says "The Existence works like a pair of bellows between heaven and earth." We can understand the full concept of the universe through the working of the system of respiration – through the incoming and outgoing breath. If the rising Sun at dawn is like the ingoing breath, the setting Sun of even-tide is like the outgoing breath. The whole Universe throbs with this breathing phenomenon – like a pair of bellows.

And now as a result of ceaseless research by Einstein and others, a new concept has been given to Physics – a concept Lao Tzu had no knowledge of – that of the Expanding Universe. Up to now we were under the impression that the universe was a fixed quantity but now the scientists say that the universe is forever expanding. Just as a child fills air in his balloon and it becomes larger and larger, so also is the Universe expanding continuously. It is expanding at the rate of millions of miles per second. Its outer circumference is getting bigger and bigger. The stars are going farther and farther away from each other.

Just as when we blow a small balloon and make two dots on it. Then as the balloon gets bigger and bigger, these two dots will go far and far apart. So also the stars are going further away from each other. The circumference is going farther and farther away from the centre.

But Einstein has placed the Western Science in great difficulty; and that is: what will be the end to this? Where will this expansion end? And if and when it stops, what will be the cause thereof? The West has yet no answer to this. This answer, however is attainable from Lao Tzu, attainable in the Upanishads. And the answer is – the expansion of the Universe is the inflating breath. But things that inflate, deflate also – there will be a deflating breath. The West has reached the concept of the inflating breath; now the realisation of the concept of the deflating breath is equally necessary.

The thinkers of the East say, ”This spreading expansion, we call by the name of creation. When this creation begins to shrink (when the breath begins to go out) we call it the annihilation of the universe.” When the universe expands to its maximum it inevitably begins the reverse process and begins to shrink. It is just as when you breathe in the lungs expand to their maximum and then at once begin to contract.

The Indian sages have made a very wonderful statement; they have likened one epoch of creation to one breath of Brahma. When Brahma breathes in, the world expands, when he breathes out, the Universe contracts and everything shrinks to its seed-form.

Lao Tzu says: ”Between heaven and earth there is just such a play of bellows. Also, everything between heaven and earth, is surrounded by duality. Where there is expansion, there is contraction”. Why does Lao Tzu say this? This he says so that if you wish to expand you must be prepared to contract. If you are very eager to attain life, you must be ready also to die. If you have a great desire for beauty, you are sowing seeds of ugliness. If you wish for success, you are making the path that leads to failure.

Someone went up to Lao Tzu one day and asked him, ”Lao Tzu, have you ever known unhappiness?” Lao Tzu began to laugh. ”No”, he said, ”I have never known unhappiness for I have never desired to know happiness.”

We also wish not to know unhappiness but that is only so that we may keep experiencing happiness. We want happiness to be with us forever. But Lao Tzu says he has never known unhappiness for he never aspired for happiness. We shall always experience misery and sorrow for when we sow seeds of happiness the seeds of unhappiness are sown automatically. The desire of happiness is the birth of unhappiness.

It is the in-going breath only that becomes the outgoing breath. Expansion alone is the way towards

contraction; and light alone is the door to darkness. But the opposite never occurs to us, while life swings, like the bellows of the blacksmith, between the opposites.

Lao Tzu can never be beaten for he has never wished to win! Lao Tzu always said, "No one has ever insulted me for I made no arrangements for praise. Whenever I went to a gathering, I always sat where people kept their shoes, for there was no way of being jostled further back!" Lao Tzu used to say, "I have always occupied the foremost place, no body could shift me even to a second position for I was always first in the last. I always stood at the farthest end of the row – from where there was no further to go. Therefore, no one could send me back further." This seems very contradictory.

But this is the correct thing. He who chooses the latest position can in no way be pushed back further; whereas he who stands in front, has made ample arrangements for being pushed back. In fact, the very step he made use of to reach the foremost seat, will be utilised by others to send him down.

Mulla Nasruddin was fishing on the bank of a river one morning. He had caught some crabs which he had kept in a bucket beside him. Some politicians happened to come for a walk and they saw the crabs in the Mulla's bucket. "Mulla, put a lid on your bucket or else the crabs will crawl out." "Never fear," replied the Mulla, "These crabs are born politicians. As soon as one crawls up, the others pull him down. They will never run away." The Mulla further explained that he always used to cover the bucket first but then I discovered what born politicians they are. Now he no longer puts a lid on to his bucket!

Whenever you climb up, you little know how many there are whom you instigate to pull you down. The alchemy lies in your very act of climbing. In fact, the pleasure of climbing up lies only in instigating others to pull you down. Understand this a little. If no one is eager to pull you down, you will get no pleasure in climbing up. If you sit on a throne and there is no one who tries to dislodge you from it, the throne no longer appeals.

The worth of the throne is only when there are thousands eager to push you off it and capture it for themselves. The pleasure you have in sitting on the throne is the same that goads the others lo get you off it. Both these are conjoined. Lao Tzu says, "You cannot pull me down for I sit at a place from where you cannot go any lower. Therefore my throne is well-protected."

Lao Tzu knows the opposite thing and to know the opposite is the sutra for perfect knowledge in this world. If we want to be foremost, we want to be foremost only. We are not aware of this contradiction that only the last can be the first. Now if we want to fill, we want only to fill. We are not aware of the opposite fact that he alone can fill who is empty. When we seek honour, we strive for honour alone for we do not know that this is a device for dishonour. It is a matter of the greatest skill and ingenuity to see the opposite. We do see the opposite.

Somebody came to visit Mulla Nasruddin. As soon as he entered the Mulla said, "Please sit down, take a chair." The man was displeased. He was a wealthy man of the village – no ordinary person; and thus to be addressed casually was very painful to him. He said, "Nasruddin, do you know who I am?"

We are always eager to say, "Who I am".

Nasruddin said, ”Be kind enough to tell me.”

”Don’t you know,” the man said, ”I am the richest man in town?” ”Forgive me,” said Nasruddin, ”I did not know. You may take two chairs.”

One cannot sit on two chairs no matter how rich one is. But the desire is there all the same. The mam was angry, ”Are you in your senses Mulla? How can I sit on two chairs?” He shouted.

Nasruddin offered a technique, ”You place one chair upon another and climb on to it,” he told him.

A throne is so many chairs one on top of the other. A throne means a seat under which there are thousands of seats. Remember however, all those who occupy the chairs beneath you and are pressed down by your weight, will always try to throw you out of your chair. There is no fun in merely sitting on a chair. Actually Man likes to ride on top of men.

Man likes to subjugate men; but the more your chair (status goes higher and higher the danger of your toppling down increases in the same ratio, for an equal number of people are pressed down under it. They will not rest till they throw you out. Therefore the first chair is never safe in this world. It is the unsafest place in the world.

Lao Tzu says, ”Our minds are always eager to attain things quickly and directly for we have no idea of the opposite.” If we are aware of the opposite, then we know that greatest of art which is Religion. Religion says if you want to attain the supreme life be ready to accept the supreme death. Die this very moment, and the supreme life is yours. Religion says if you want to attain that wealth that no thief can take from you then become wealthless and consider it to be your greatest treasure. And if you wish honour and respect, become a nonentity voluntarily.

There was a fakir in Japan by the name of Leechee. When he died people discovered that he had spread all kinds of wrong stories about himself. He had persuaded a few people to spread all kinds of rumours about him. He died an unknown man. As he lay dying he thanked his friends for thus saving him from the madness of crowds. He said it was because of their kindness that he was now dying peacefully. He was such a nonentity that no one came forward to challenge his position. Who cared to challenge an unknown man? It is the status, the position of a man that attracts others and goads them to bring about his downfall.

Lao Tzu says: ”Opposing breaths are forever at work in Existence like the pair of bellows in the blacksmith’s shop.” One thing he stresses very often and that is, that when the bellows are empty, then too its power remains unbroken. Do not think it to be powerless when empty. The power in the bellows is a complete force – unbroken. The Void has the power of Perfection.

Modern physics says that when the atom is broken nothing remains except Void. But in the universe, the source of energy is the explosion of the atom. The Himalayas cannot compare in strength with an atom which is so microscopic, you cannot see it with the naked eye. If we place one million atoms one on top of the other, it can only be as thick as a single human hair. We have heard it being said ’Removing the skin of a hair’ but this would be removing the skin of the skin of the hair, infinite times. This reminds me of a story.

A friend of Nasruddin had come from a village to meet him. He had brought a duck as a present for him. Nasruddin had the duck cooked and he treated his guest to a lavish dinner. Fifteen days after, a man came. Nasruddin greeted him cordially and offered him a chair. The guest said, "I am a friend of the friend who brought you the goose." Nasruddin fed him on the same dish.

But the guests kept on coming.

Then the friend's friend's friend and then his friend came! It was six months now and Nasruddin was alarmed. Whoever came claimed to be a friend of the one who came last. To the last in this line, Nasruddin out of desperation offered hot water and said, "Have some gravy." "But this is no gravy!" The man exclaimed, "This is just hot water." "This is the gravy of the gravy of the gravy.... of the gravy of the duck that was cooked. Now if you wish to have the gravy of the goose that was cooked six months ago, it is a very wrong thing. As long as it took you to travel from the friend, it has taken that long for the gravy to travel from the goose. Next time you come, you shall get only cold water, for now the journey of the soup is becoming too long!"

If we think about the atom, it is not as broad as even the cover of the hair. It is a very long journey. If we peel the hair a million times what will remain of the hair? As yet the atom has never been viewed, not only by the naked eye but also not even through a microscope. Scientists say that what they surmise about the atom can be compared to how people conceived of God in olden times. They have not seen the atom but there are problems that can only be solved if we accept the existence of the atom. Therefore, we have to believe in the atom. This is exactly what religious people used to say, "We have not seen God but there are many problems that cannot be solved without accepting His existence." So these are mere assumptions or you may say, "God is not visible but his proofs are."

So also the scientists say, "The atoms we cannot see but we can see the explosion." Hiroshima is reduced to ashes. A million people turn to ashes. This is the result. This result cannot be falsified. This is the truth. It is visible to the naked eye; but that within which this result takes place, is invisible. We only imagine that something has broken, resulting in the release of so much energy. That imaginary thing is the atom. But such a subtle and imaginary thing as an atom is the producer of such vast energy.

Religion has always been saying that if you want to attain the Vast Expanse, you shall have to attain the most minimum the subtle. Religion always talks in the opposites. The present day scientists have also begun to understand a little. Religion says, "To attain the great, attain the subtle. If you want to attain God, you shall have to attain that fraction of Atman that lies hidden within you." He who sets out to attain God directly, never finds Him. He will lose himself but never attain God. He who desires to seek God, will have to forget Him altogether. He should discover the atom of life that lies within his own self. No sooner this is discovered, God is attained.

To catch hold of the atom is to catch hold of the vast expanse. But this inverse fact does not come within our understanding. Besides, the atom is a complete Void – as good as naught; and this naught nurtures such vast energy within itself! But this also is not the absolute Void. The Void that Lao Tzu talks of, is a complete, a perfect Void. Now if an atom, that is not a perfect Void, can give rise to so much energy how much energy can the perfect Void be holding within itself?

The Rishis always have said that through the Void, the Universe came into being. And so is this vast expanse possible, so many moons and stars – millions and millions of them! Our calculations are just the opposite. We believe that whatever is born is born where it originally is. We think things can come out only from a filled condition. What can come out of emptiness? We think this way for we have no idea of the opposite arithmetic. Lao Tzu is the greatest proclaimer in this world of this opposing mathematics. He says that the perennial energy lies embedded in the state of total Void. Why is Lao Tzu so eager to declare this?

Lao Tzu means by this that if you wish to be the owner of this undivided energy, you shall have to become Void – like the pair of bellows that have been completely emptied of air – where there is complete vacuum. The Supreme Existence manifests only then. In that very void, you get the first glimpse of the perennial energy .

We are such that we are busy filling ourselves, just as a mad blacksmith might fill his bellows with things. Then the bellows become useless. We are such insane blacksmiths, filling the bellows of existence with all kinds of things. We fill its emptiness with things that are worthless, useless, like wealth, status, prestige, with friends, with wives and husbands and sons and daughters. The emptiness is filled to the brim. And then we become like a junk-shop. We are so full, that a slight movement and we knock against something. We only somehow manage to live in these conditions.

We do not have an undivided energy within us. Mahavira says, ”He who becomes empty, becomes the lord of perennial energy.” How can we empty ourselves, how can we become Void – Lao Tzu explains further on. At present he says only this that it is necessary that we should understand the glory of Emptiness, that we should understand the foolishness of filling ourselves.

All the intrinsic and deep methods that have been evolved in this world – be it yoga, meditation, tantra, worship, prayer – all these methods are methods of emptying man. Man gets filled with very insignificant things.

Mulla Nasruddin was friendly with the king of his country. The Mulla was rated among the wisest of his kingdom. One day the king asked him, ”Mulla, does your mind become vacant when you pray?” ”Certainly Sire”, The Mulla replied, ”My mind is an absolute naught when I pray.” The king did not believe him. He told Nasruddin, ”Come straight to me from the mosque after prayers, this Friday. I shall have faith in your truthfulness. Tell me the truth. If you tell the truth, you shall not have to ride donkey any longer. I shall give you the best horse in my kingdom.”

Nasruddin said, ”Can I have a look at the horse?” He was shown the horse. He was terribly tempted at the sight of the beautiful animal. ”You have put me in a dilemma,” he told the king. ”I shall present myself on Friday.”

Nasruddin came to the king after his Friday prayers. The king had tied the horse at the gate. He asked Nasruddin, ”Tell me honestly – did no thought cross your mind during prayers?” ”My mind was completely empty,” said Nasruddin. ”Only at the very end there was a little trouble.” ”What was that problem?” The king asked. ”I was sure you will give the horse”, said Nasruddin, ”but I was debating within myself whether you give the whip? This whip made me mad with frenzy. I tried my utmost to think only of Allah but I could think of nothing but the whip. This one thought possessed me – I shall need a whip to ride the horse home. Will you give it?”

Imagine, a small thing like a whip and God is set aside. A whip is an insignificant thing but a mere thought of it can remove God from within. It is just as when a mote goes in the eye, the whole world becomes a blank. An insignificant mote hides the highest of mountains from view. A small thought destroys the emptiness within and the puniest and most insignificant thing is. enough to fill the vacuum within.

We are all filled within and that is the cause of our poverty and misery. He who becomes empty within, becomes an emperor. There is only one way to become a king – be empty like the skies above; Let the inside be filled with space. The greater the space within, the more powerful is the energy that is created.

All the great and significant happenings of the world take place in silence, in emptiness.

Madame Curie, the first woman who won the Nobel Prize, was asked what she had done to attain the prize. She replied, "As long as I strived to do anything, I attained nothing. The Nobel Prize that I received is not because of something that I did. Something rose from the silence within me."

It is an astonishing fact that the Mathematics on account of which she got the prize, she had got up in the night and jotted down on a piece of paper. For years she was working on this problem and had met with no success. She was completely tired. She had made up her mind to give up the experiment entirely. That very night, she got up from sleep, jotted something on a piece of paper and went to sleep again. In the morning it came to her that she had got up in the night and written something. When she saw the paper she was astounded to find her problem solved! She could not bring herself to say that it was she who had solved it. This had come from the emptiness within.

Einstein has said time and again in his speeches that whatever he has known remained unknown as long as he tried to know it: "When I gave up all effort, somewhere from the space within, I do not know how, this knowledge arose and manifested itself." The person who won a Nobel Prize on his discovery of the chain of atoms says this knowledge appeared to him in a dream at night. He could not believe it himself but that is how it was. The greatest and best happenings that have taken place in this world, have all happened in the Void – whether it has happened to Buddha or to Mahavira, whether it has happened to Lao Tzu or to Einstein.

Nijinski used to say that: "As long as I am dancing conscious that 'I' am dancing, my dance is ordinary but when the Void within me takes hold of me my dance becomes extraordinary."

One day on returning home his wife told him. "Your dance today was so extraordinary, that my heart cried to think that you were the only unlucky one who could not see it." Nijinski said, "You are wrong. I too saw." "How can I believe that?" His wife questioned. He replied, "As long as it is I who dance, I cannot see myself but when the Void within me takes over the dance, I stand aside and watch like a spectator."

Nijinski was the only dancer who was not affected by gravitation – so it is said. Many a time during the dance, he would jump in the air and then he came down ever so slowly like a feather from a bird's wing. He never fell with a thud like a human being should but came down as a leaf falls from a tree.

It was a wonder feat that left the spectators astounded. It seemed an impossible feat – unbelievable! People questioned him how he managed it for gravitation must work on the human body. No matter to whom the body belongs, the earth pulls it down. Nijinski would say, "As long as 'I am' gravitation works but when the Void takes over. I am not conscious of anything. Then I fall to the ground as if I am weightless."

Within there is the Void. Whenever a great dance exposition has taken place, it has arisen out of this Void, whenever a great poem has been created, it has arisen from this Emptiness, whenever a great insight has been attained it is through this very Emptiness. Science is born from here, so is religion and art but we, who are filled with the ego cannot get anywhere near it from any direction for we are never empty. We can never fly in the open skies for we are so weighed down with the stones within that keep us bound to the ground.

Lao Tzu says, "The emptiness is the perfect, indivisible energy."

Lao Tzu always used to tell a story. He used to say, "I heard the name of a great singer who has not sung for years. I set out in search of him for I was curious how a person could be famous when he had not sung a single song for years. When at last I located him, I found he had no instrument nor the wherewithal to sing. He was sitting under a tree. I asked him, 'I have been told you are a very great singer but I find no arrangements for music here.'

"To this he replied, 'The wherewithal was necessary as long as I had to create the music. Now the music is created by itself. As long as the songs did not come of their own, I had to sing them. Now the songs pour out on their own.'"

"But I cannot hear them," Lao Tzu told him. The Singer replied, "Stay a while here. You will have to stay with me for sometime and by and by, you will begin to hear."

So Lao Tzu stayed with him. Soon he began to hear the music. Then he went back. When his disciples asked him, "Did you hear the music? How was it?" He replied, "It was the music of emptiness. There were no words there – there was the silence of emptiness. Today I can tell you that that music which has words, is no music, it is merely noise. Music is, where there is the silence of emptiness."

It is not possible for us to visualize such music. You were listening to the sitar now. If you think that when a tune arises from the strings of the sitar, music is created, you are wrong. It is the intervening gap between each note that forms the music – the gap, the empty space between two notes. He who listens to the notes, does not listen to the music. He only hears the notes. He who listens to the empty space between two notes, he alone listens to the music. The greater the exposition of music, the more it depends on the gaps between the notes.

It has been said about Schubert that whenever he played the violin there were long intervals in between. Once when he was performing, a music teacher happened to be sitting in the front row. Schubert began to play, then gradually his hand stopped and the strings of his violin became silent. One moment, two moments, three! The music teacher thought, perhaps he has forgotten what he has to play. "Play what you know," he advised him, "Leave that which you do not know." Pundits of any art, who are conversant with all the rules are always ready with their advice. They know all that is within the rules. That which is beyond all rules, is beyond them also.

Schubert wrote in his autobiography. "For the first time I realised the calibre of my listeners. What I played was only the passage through which music flowed when I stopped. But the kind music master said unto him, "If you have forgotten your notes, play something else." Schubert threw his violin on the floor and went home. He never picked up his instrument again. People pleaded with him, "Before whom should I play?" He asked. "These people know nothing of music. They take the noise of the notes as music. That is only to wake you up so that you may not go to sleep. Then when you awake, the instrument should stop so that you can slip into the silence."

Buddha used to say: "What I could say, I have told you but that is not the real thing. That which I could not say, I have not said that is the real thing." Therefore, those who have merely heard me, will not understand me. Those who have heard my 'not saying' they alone will understand me." To hear that which is unsaid – can this be possible? Certainly, it is possible. In fact saying is only purposeful when between the two banks of saying, the river of non-saying flows. Notes are useful only when between its two banks, the river af music flows. The notes, the words form only the banks but those who take the shores for the river, never understand the river. They never reach the river.

Lao Tzu says: "Between heaven and earth is the empty space like a pair of bellows. That alone is the indivisible energy." No matter how much of this energy you consume, it is regenerated that much more. The more you use the Void the more life is born. But we know not how to use the Void. We do not also know how to be empty. Lao Tzu shows us how to be the Void and how to make use of this Void.

"MUCH SPEECH LEADS TO SWIFT EXHAUSTION."

The more words there are within, the more is the intellect wasted away, the more does it rust. But our intellect is formed of words. The collection of words, is our treasure. Everything in the West, has become Statistics. The western mathematicians say, "The greater your wealth of words, the more successful you are. From his wealth of words we can gauge how many steps a man has covered of success in his life." A man's success is measured by his words.

What they say is correct in a way. What is the ability of a politician? His ability is that he can play with words. What is the prowess of a religious teacher? He can play with different types of words. The same goes for a novelist. Their success depends on how they play with words. Those whose excessive energy is spent in words are the successful people of the world.

Therefore this mania of teaching words. All our education is a training in words. The more words a person knows the more hopes there are of his success.

But Lao Tzu maintains that excessive words weaken the intellect. The more we fill the mind with words, the weaker the intellect becomes. He speaks in contrary terms. All our endeavour is to learn as many words as possible. A man learns one language, then he learns another, then another. We praise him that he knows so many languages. One man, we say, is a pundit for he has the Vedas by heart, he knows the Upanishads thoroughly, he can recite the Gita from the beginning to the end. Why? Because he has the treasure of words? But what is the value of words? Is there any substance in words? Is there any spirit behind them?

The only substance behind words is as when a person is thirsty .and he drinks them in thinking they will appease his thirst; or it is like satisfying one's hunger with the food of words. This may make

you forget your hunger for sometime. If you are thirsty and say, ”Wait a while, water is coming,” your thirst will be comforted a little. The hope and belief that water is coming brings a lot of satisfaction. You are hungry. The very noises from the kitchen at such a time sound very comforting. If you feel hungry at night, your dreams provide you with dinner as your sleep is not broken; you can wait till the morning.

Words bring comfort. They also deceive. If someone here shouts loudly. ”Fire, fire!” the effect of his words will be the same as if this place was really in flames! We will not be burnt but run we will. All the possible results that follow in the case of fire, will accrue, except anybody being burnt – running stampede, falling, getting hurt, shouting, shrieking etc. The effect of words is great. Now, if someone shouts a number of times, ”Fire, fire! ” and there is no fire and then really the place catches fire, no one is going to move!

A very great psychologist earned a lot of wealth, so he thought now he should relax. He bought a piece of land in a village. He meant to till the land and sow a harvest just for fun for there was no compulsion to earn money. Money he had in plenty for nowadays, there is no profession like that of a psychiatrist. The possibility of large gains these days is no longer in diamonds and gold but in the skull of man. Man is becoming more and more insane and it is said that the psychiatrist cures man of this malady; but there is no proof that they actually cure. They are only capable of reassuring the patient that he is well. A man going to a psychiatrist, for say two years does not get cured, rather, he begins to feel that madness is the natural state of being.

Now it was time to sow the seed. He had his land ploughed with a tractor and then he began to throw seeds; but to his consternation, all the crows of the village came and made a good feast of his seeds. The next day he threw the seeds and again the crows ate them away. The third day it was the same. Now he thought he would have to ask someone. There was no other way for him but to ask his neighbour, who was an ignorant farmer and who used to have a good laugh at his expense these last three days.

He asked for his help. The farmer came and went through all the gestures of throwing the seeds but threw none. The crows came down as usual, but finding no seeds, they made land bubble and flew away. The next day, the farmer repeated his performance. That day there were fewer crows and they were less angry. The third day he played the same trick and the fourth day, no crows came. On this day, he sowed the seeds. The psychologist was astonished, ”Wonderful,” he said. ”What is the secret?” he asked him. ”It is very simple – just plain psychology. Ever heard of psychology?” he asked him, ”It took only three days to make the crows realize he was faking.”

But man? He is strange – he lives, lives upon lives merely in words. This plain psychology, is beyond his comprehension that words are empty.

There is nothing within words but we refuse to believe this. Someone wishes you, ”Namaskar” and you feel you have received respect and reverence but these are not so cheap as to be obtained by a mere salutation. More often than not, it is a way of concealing respect. So that the face may not reveal the actuaL feeling within, a man quickly folds his hands and performs a Namaskar. Or perhaps the person who is saluted is thus cheated by directing his attention to your hands instead of your face. Perhaps the mind is saying, ”Why did I have to see the face of this horrid chap and that too early in the morning.” But your folded hands deceive him and he accepts your greetings. graciously and thinks kindly of you too!

Every day as you go along the road, you meet a particular person and you like him. When you say to him, "Hello," he returns your greetings enthusiastically. This morning he did not return your greetings. Then you know what happens to you? Your whole attitude towards him changes. You wished him. he did not reply." Just because he has bought a house, he has become proud! You think. It never occurs to you that the house was bought long ago. "He has bought a car – does he think he has developed wings? Ants develop Wings just before they die!" Thus his whole life-story is re-written within your mind just because he failed to greet you. One small word brings so much difference!

Words are so precious for people. We live in words, we eat in words, we sleep in words. In the West, where people are so intelligent, it is said whether a man has done anything for you or not; whether it is proper or not proper, you make it a point to say 'thank you.' We, in the East, are not so intelligent. If a wife brings a cup of tea for her husband, he does not thank her or show his gratification in any way. He should, for the whole history of his marital life can be changed with this one word. One thank-you and a sugarless cup of tea tastes sweet! The same becomes bitter no matter how much sugar it contains, if there is no 'thank-you' to follow it. You might think, "My wife and I are together for the last 30 years. What need is there for such formality?" You are wrong. The need is greater! In the 30 years, she knows vou so well that the 'thank you' becomes more essential! She too may agree with you that there is no need but do not believe her. Perhaps it is just a ruse to make you say it again! It is so gratifying, so satisfying!

Words have become our very life. If someone says, "I love you very much," everything changes within you! A dark night becomes filled with moonlight when someone expresses this sentiment. It is quite possible he may just be repeating some lines of a film!

Why is there such an interrelation between us and words? It is because, we possess nothing else besides words. We have nothing like the being, the spirit, within us. We are absolutely devoid of everything. We are not empty in the sense that Lao Tzu means – not in the term of Void but we are destitute, beggars. We are not empty in terms of the Indivisible Energy but we are empty in the sense that we have nothing in our hands. not even emptiness! Thus we are empty and we live on words.

Mulla Nasruddin fell down on the road. It was very sunny. A crowd gathered round him. Nasruddin lay flat he did not even breathe! Someone from the crowd said, "Run, get a cup of wine, he will be alright." Nasruddin opened one eye, "What can one cup do? At least send for two!" The crowd dispersed for Nasruddin had gained consciousness. One little word 'wine' did the work of wine.

Now Nasruddin was experienced! He was undergoing training in first-aid. When the examiner asked him at the end of his training what he would do if he found a man fallen on the road, he replied, "I will give him a cup of wine." "And if the wine is not available?" The examiner asked. "I will promise to give him later and I am sure he will gain his consciousness. It happened to me once," said the Mulla!

We live merely on words. And for these words Lao Tzu says, "They only serve to weaken the intellect." Now the fact remains that Lao Tzu also uses the medium of words. When he speaks, he uses words. Then a great delusion is created – when Lao Tzu himself uses words to convey his thoughts, why does he speak against words?

It is inevitable fact that when we want to convey something to somebody, we have to make use of words but we have become so mad that when we want to convey something to our own selves, even then we make use of words! There is no need to use words for one's own self! We keep talking within our own selves. All the twenty-four hours, we are talking to ourselves. When he talks to someone, a man of course speaks. When he is not speaking to someone, he speaks to himself. He divides himself into two – the speaker and the listener – and talks away. This incessant talking creates a war within. This continuous talking causes so many words to pile up within that the Void that is hidden in the Atman is completely lost sight of; so much so that we are not at all aware of it. It is only when these superficial layers of words are removed that we can be acquainted with the atman.

Lao Tzu says, "Profusion of words causes the intellect to be exhausted. Therefore it is necessary to be established within our own centre" – within our own centre! Why? – because the centre is empty. Words are merely the circumference. They are just like the leaves that cover the waters of the lake and thus hide the lake from view. Such is the condition within us due to the abundance of words. The Void lies hidden within. This Void Lao Tzu refers to as the centre. He says, "That is the very centre of our being. But we live only on the circumference and are so badly involved in it that we cannot go within. The circumference joins one word to another, then to the next and the next... and so it goes on.

Psychologists say, we live by associations. If you are given a word say, 'dog' you will start off. The word dog will act like the starting signal – the shot of a gun as in a race. The word dog will go within. You will think of all the dogs you have known and about whom you know, their various names and breeds. Then you will pass on to the owners – which friend pos-sesses which dog. Then that will lead to the wives of the friends – which one's wife appeals to you most... and God knows in what romance you will end this journey started off by a single word – dog.

A small word starts a journey within you at once. You are all ready within. You get the word and you begin chewing the end. This means you will never have the time to understand. As soon as a word is given to you, you start. Only he can understand, who can stand silent and empty with the word. I say something – you will understand it only if there is emptiness before you. I say something and the emptiness within faces my words just as a mirror would catch my reflection. If your heart is silent, empty, you will understand what I say and also that which I do not say. You will see me as I appear and you will see me also as I do not appear.

But there are so many words within you that you will not wait to hear me. Before I utter the first word, your journey will have started. The journey proceeds within you in a line of words. You will begin to think, "This is what is said in the Gita or this is what is said in the Koran; but this is against my religion! I cannot accept this!"

Once I was talking in a small gathering. One person in that gathering happened to be the only Mohammedan. There were very few people – about 50. Whatever I said, the Muslim friend would shake his head in assent. He happened to sit right in front of me. I wondered if I could say something that would stop his head from nodding. So only for this I said, "Koran is a wonderful book but it is very rustic. Surely some villagers wrote it." Now his head was fixed! It did not move, he even forgot where he was sitting!

I had nothing to do with this friend but he was saying yes to my yes and no to my no. As soon as

I used the word rustic, he disagreed with me completely. Thereafter I saw him sitting erect in his chair – my connection with him had snapped. Thereafter all the others were in the room except this gentleman. The small word – rustic and it must have started a train of words within him – "Does he mean ignorant?... does he mean this or does he mean that...?" He became hard and invulnerable thereafter. Actually when I was speaking, there was a constant dialogue going on within him – whether what I said was correct or not.

We have a body language. Many things we do not say with our mouth we say with our body. A new science has developed recently in the West, based on this body language. Can the language of the body be understood? Now when you meet a woman and take a liking to her, she will always be shrinking back with the fear that you may advance. Her angle is tipped backwards. If 50 couples are talking in a club, it can be very easily surmised who is developing a tenderness for whom, only by their body-language; or who is trying to put off whom. A woman who likes you, sits in a different way with you; if she doesn't she will sit in a different way. When you love someone, you sit next to her in a relaxed manner for you expect no danger from that quarter. If you do not love her you will be alert and on your guard for you sense danger. Before a stranger, you will sit in quite another manner.

If you like what I say you sit in a particular manner. If you do not like what I say, your body-language changes immediately. If you have interest and curiosity in what I say, your back-bone will bend a little forward: if not you sit glued to the back of the chair. In so doing you convey you have nothing to gain by my words and the matter has ended for you there.

From the outside also, a man can give a hint of what is going on within him. Your face shows whether you are saying yes within or no. The salesman in a shop keeps watching your face. If he is showing ties to you, his attention is not on which tie you choose – that he leaves to you. He concentrates on your face; which tie engages your attention longer, at once its price goes up. Your eye does not stop too long anywhere. It has its duration. If you gaze at a person a little longer, you might trigger off a fight for the eye has its time-limit. When you just look, it means nothing; but when you stare, it means you like what you see or at least that you are interested. This affects the other person also. When the mechanism of words starts within you, it becomes evident in your eyes, your posture – in your body-language.

When you become empty within, the body also becomes silent. Have you seen an image of Buddha or Mahavira? These figures are absolutely silent from outside and the reason is, there is an absolute void within. Everything is still within, there is no movement. Just as water without ripples; just as a steady flame when the air is still, so when you are still and empty within, you reach up to your centre. And Lao Tzu says, "To be established within one's centre is propitious." Not to wander in words but to be fixed within one's own centre is propitious.

Enough food for today, we shall talk again tomorrow.

CHAPTER 18

The supreme power – corresponding to the valley female and mysterious

4 November 1971 om in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 6: SUTRA I & 2

THE SPIRIT OF THE VALLEY

1. THE VALLEY SPIRIT DIES NOT, EVER THE SAME.

THE FEMALE MYSTERY THUS DO WE NAME.

IT'S GATE FROM WHICH AT FIRST THEY ISSUED FORTH.

IS CALLED THE ROOT FROM WHICH GREW HEAVEN AND EARTH,

2. LONG AND UNBROKEN DOES ITS POWER REMAIN,

USE GENTLY AND WITHOUT THE TOUCH OF PAIN.

That which is born, verily dies. That which begins must end also.

He alone can go beyond death, who is not born. He alone can be infinite who is eternal. Light is created, it can be destroyed. Darkness is eternal. Perhaps you have never thought on these lines. The sun rises in the morning, sets in the evening. The lamp burns and the wick is spent, and the flame is no more. When the lamp was not lit, darkness was there. Now when the lamp is lit, the

darkness cannot be seen. The flame dies down and darkness is back where it was. Darkness is not affected at all. Darkness can never be put out. Darkness never ends; because there is no beginning to darkness. For light there is a beginning and so there is an end.

Another most interesting fact is, we can create light so we can also end it. We cannot create darkness and hence cannot des-troy it. The power of darkness is infinite. The power of light is not infinite.

Lao Tzu says: "THE VALLEY SPIRIT DIES NOT. IT IS EVER THE SAME AS IT IS."

What is this Spirit of the Valley?

Wherever there are mountains, there are bound to be valleys. But the mountains are created and destroyed, the valley is not. The valley means, the negative, the darkness. The mountain is the positive. If we take the right meaning, what is a valley? A valley is the absence of something. A mountain is the presence of something. Light is the presence of something whereas darkness is absence, non-presence. If I am in this room, I can be taken out of this room. When I am not present in this room my absence will b there and this you cannot throw out. There is no way to touch absence. If I am alive, I can be killed but if I die, you can do nothing to my death. Nothing can be done with that which is not. Therefore we can never create darkness nor destroy it.

The Valley Spirit is Lao Tzu's nomenclature. What is this Valley-Spirit? The valley does not exist, it only appears between two mountains. This space between the mountains remains the same even long after the mountains are no more. The valley remains where it was, only it does not appear as a valley once the mountains are no more. When the mountains spring up again, the valley is seen once more. Similarly darkness does not go anywhere. When you light a lamp, it merely hides. It becomes invisible because of the light. When the light goes off, darkness appears just as it was. Perhaps darkness is unaware of the existence or non-existence of light. Lao Tzu's entire thinking, his entire philosophy is based on the Negative aspect in the Void, the Emptiness.

Therefore Lao Tzu says, "The Female-Mystery, thus do we name." This needs to be understood and we shall have to go a little deeper for this is the original base of Lao Tzu's tantra. What is meant by the female-mystery. It is the same mystery of the valley. What is the mystery of a female, is the mystery of darkness. The mystery of a female is a very deep mystery of Existence.

This is why the very ancient religions of the world, looked upon God as a female and not as a male. Their understanding was much deeper than the understanding of people who look upon God as father. As the male influence increased in the world however, God was also given the male-concept. But this father-concept of God is relatively new, whereas God the mother is an ancient concept.

The actual fact is, the very concept of 'father' is very new – whereas the concept of mother is very old. The father-concept came into existence only about 5,000 to 6,000 years ago. Older than the concept of father is the concept of uncle. In the animal kingdom, there is no concept of 'father' whereas the mother is certain. The concept of father is man-made therefore. Now when we installed man as the father, we very quickly removed woman from the throne of God-hood and placed the man there. Then those who conceived of God as the father, quickly lost the sutras of feminine-mystery. its secrets were lost to them.

Now Lao Tzu talks in the times when there was no concept of God, the father, in the world. This requires to be studied properly. We shall have to see it from many angles. Only the shall we be able to understand it.

A child is born. The father is accidental in the birth of the child. His feelings are not very deep. New scientists say we can do without the father. It will not be long before the part of the father will be wiped out. The birth comes through the mother, so the key to the mystery of creating life, lies within the mother. There is no such key or mystery in the father's body. Therefore the father can at any time be proclaimed redundant. Even an injection can perform his part in the creation of the child.

Besides, if I want to become the father of a child, 10,000 years hence, I can; but if a mother desires to be the mother of a child 10,000 years hence, she cannot be. This is because, the mother's presence is very necessary, the father's is not. The father's sperms can be conserved in a deep freeze for any length of time. Even after 10,000 years, they can cause the birth of a child, if injected into a woman. The presence of the father is not at all necessary. Very soon children will be born posthumously. The father may be dead hundreds of years hence, his child can still be born. The reason is, nature does not take any extensive or deep work from the male in the process of creation. The profound work is taken from the mother – the work of creation.

Psychologists therefore deduce that woman does such a great creative job – that of producing a child – that no need to find substitutes remains. This is why women as a whole, are not creative, whereas men are. Man creates pictures, statues, makes discoveries in science, writes poetry, creates music. You will be surprised to know that even though cooking is supposed to be a woman's forte, yet the best dishes are creations of man

New dishes are always invented by man. Any big hotel or even in a king's palace, women are never employed for cooking. They keep male cooks. Whether it is a picture that is painted or an image created or whether a poem or a novel is written, it is always the man who does it. What is the reason?

Scientists say man is jealous of woman. He even feels inferior to her. Therefore, he also strives to create something so that he can stand up before woman and say that he too is capable of creating.

A woman does not indulge in these lesser creations because of the fact that she is instrumental in creating a human life which is a very great act in itself. There is no longer any desire for creation within her once she becomes a mother. So when a woman becomes a mother, a great work of art, no matter how great, pales into insignificance as an act of creation, before her child. This is why barren women always strive to create like men. She competes with men to create something. If a woman becomes a mother in the true sense of the word, her existence becomes fulfilled in her most inner-most depths. Nature has chosen woman as a source of creation.

We shall have to understand the Female-Mystery that Lao Tzu speaks of, in the female body, in order to understand the Female-Mystery of Existence. Our difficulties are manifold because all the effort to understand Existence, has been done by the male. All the philosophy has been created by men. Not a single religion, up to now, has been found around a woman-prophet. All shastras belong to man. This is why, Lao Tzu had difficulty in finding a partner for he has praised the female-mystery. When a man thinks or does something, he always does so from where he stands himself and so all his creations are male oriented.

Also, man can never understand woman. Therefore he always experiences that woman is something mysterious, something that slips away. What is this that slips away? Verily, man and woman stay together. Man is born out of woman, he lives all his life with her, he loves her, then also what is that something within a woman that is forever strange and unknown to man? This very strange and unknown element in woman, Lao Tzu calls the Female-Mystery. The mystery of the valley, the mystery of darkness, the excellence of negation! What is within woman?

When a woman falls in love, she is never aggressive. She is not aggressive even in love – she waits. She gives you the opportunity of aggression. You can never tell a woman – "You entangled me in your love, you married me". And although the fact is, that it is the woman who manoeuvres, she never takes the initiative. This is her mystery – to draw without any action – non-active attraction. Their very presence attracts. That which Krishna has described as 'in-action', that is the very mystery of woman.

Even when she falls in love, there is no hint from her. Her presence attracts you. It is you who first make the declaration of love. The woman is never the first to declare. She never takes the initiative, for initiative is aggressive, it is positive. When I say to someone, "I love you," I step out of myself, I have caused aggression, I have trespassed into someone else's boundary. A woman never trespasses, even then she is attractive – what is the reason? Verily, her attraction is negative, non-active. She calls but you cannot hear her voice. She stretches out her hand but they are not visible to sight. The invitation is there but there is no form to it.

The action has to be taken by man. He has to take the first step. He has to go to her, appeal to her. Even then she may refuse and walk away.

Whenever a woman says yes, hastily, know that she too is ignorant of the female-mystery for as soon as the woman says 'yes', she becomes useless. Her denial, her refusal – her constant refusal is the mystery of the infinite essence. Her 'no' however is such as a man can never say. When a man says 'no' he means no. When a woman says 'no' she means yes. If a woman has to refuse she does not say no, for that also, is too much for her.

Mulla Nasruddin fell in love with a girl. He is terribly distressed. He went home and told his father. Mulla is very sad and worried. His father said, "Why are you so worried?"

Mulla said, "I am in great difficulty. The woman I have been pursuing since the last nine months, has dealt a final blow to me." The father said, "You are inexperienced. When a woman says no, it never means no." Nasruddin said, "That I also know but she did not say no. She called me a dog! If she had even said 'no', I would have been after her for another nine years. She did not give me even that much lead!"

When a woman says 'yes', she speaks the language of man. Therefore, 'yes' always sounds hollow and insignificant and in a deeper sense, unethical when it comes from a woman's lips, for even this much is aggression. All the mystery and secret of a woman lies in the fact that she says no and she invites you. She makes no commitment on her own. All commitments come from the man. Yet, do not be under the illusion that a woman has done nothing. She does a great deal, only her method of doing is negative, like the valley or the darkness. Negation is her method. To step away is an invitation to come near, her very act of freeing herself is a call. This is feminine mystery. If we go deep into this, we shall understand very many things.

Even in the matter of sex, woman is passive. Never in the history of the world has a woman been accused for an outrage. This is an impossibility for her. A man commits outrage. 99 times out of 100, whatever man does, is an oppression. The relationship that a husband keeps with his wife is also 99

Woman's personality is receptive. Not only this but even her body has been so designed by nature that she can be nothing but receptive. It is the man who commits the aggression, which is absolutely coincidental and which can be done away with. The man's body is aggressive but creation takes place only through the woman who is receptive only. Scientists say that birth always takes place in darkness. The seed sprouts only in the darkness of the soil. Take the seeds out in the light and the seed stops sprouting. The birth of a child takes place in the darkness of the mother's womb. Light turns birth into death.

The mysterious sutras of Existence are always formed in darkness, in the hidden, secret world. That alone can be secret, which is passive. That which is aggressive carl never be hidden. Therefore man's personality is more superficial and with little depth. The woman's personality is much more deep and less superficial.

This is the very reason why a man tires so soon whereas a woman does not, for aggression is very tiring. Therefore there cannot be male-prostitutes for one intercourse tires him. woman could become a prostitute for even fifty acts of sex, do not tire her. She is merely receptive, she does nothing. So a very strange and unique happening took place: women became prostitutes, men could not; men could be aggressive, women could not be; men became ruffians, woman could not.

You will be surprised tO know that to a 100 girls that are born, there are 116 boys born. Nature keeps the balance for the body of a male is weak. We always think that man is the stronger of the two but this is a mere notion. That is why 116 boys are born to every 101 girls that are born, 16 boys die before they reach the age of 14 and so the number becomes equal. Nature has to produce 16 boys more; they are the extras needed to keep the balance.

The average age of a woman is more than a man's by 5 to 7 years. If a man lives for 70 years, the woman lives till 75. How much labour the woman's body undergoes! The labour involved in giving birth to one child is the same as the labour involved in producing one atom-bomb! And a woman can produce 20 children and still live five years longer than man. Women are less prone to illness also. The illnesses she does suffer from are all caused by the male-dominated society she lives in and the harassment thereof. Seventy per cent of her ailments are due to the male-domination. Man arranges his affairs from his point of view and woman has to adjust herself accordingly. This is the cause of all her illnesses. Hysteria is the result of adjusting to the male-society.

If there be a woman dominated society the incidence of hysteria among the men would be five times more. Almost all men would turn insane. It is the quality of self:resistance that has kept our woman-folk from ali going mad. Yet we find women ill-tempered, jealous, quarrelsome. She indulges in quarrel all the twenty-four hours. This is all because she is not allowed to be what she is born to be by our society, which is always demanding other things of them. This makes their creative power turn towards perversion, destruction and unnatural activities.

Woman has been so long and so much suppressed and tyrannized by men that people (and also women themselves) have come to believe themselves to be the weaker sex. I wish to tell you that

those who know, know differently; and what they know is that women are so powerful and strong that if they had not been subdued they would have suppressed men long ago. Woman needs to be subdued from childhood for she can prove dangerous. Woman has been suppressed the world over only for this reason. Had she been allowed to grow up free, man's plight would have been pitiable. Therefore she has been kept in check from all sides, right from her childhood.

And the injunctions on women were very much like the Chinese custom of putting a little girl's feet in iron shoes so that her feet did not grow. She could not run, she could not walk and always needed the support of man. Then the men turned round and told them, "You are so frail, you are so delicate!" They rated this frailty very high for that was the only way they could control them!

A woman can prove stronger than man, if she is allowed to develop completely for nature has endowed her with the power of creation. The power of creation is so great a power that it can only be contained by those who are strong; for they alone are capable of holding the embryo.

Lao Tzu says, "Understand this Female-Mystery well." This Spirit of the Valley never tires, never dies. Understand well this passivity, this art of acting without action, this non-violent aggression, this secret of calling without calling – understand it well. Lao Tzu says, "Only by understanding this secret, can a man attain the Supreme Truth." We can never attain the Supreme Truth with our male-attitude for no act of aggression can be committed on the Supreme Truth. We cannot storm the house of God with a rifle or a sword!

Only he attains God who has thoroughly understood this Female-Mystery, who has so surrendered himself, who has so let go of himself that the power of God descends into him – just as in the act of love, the woman lets go of herself so entirely for the man to descend into her.

A unique fact has begun to come within our notice since the last ten years. The authentic woman is completely lost and the pseudo-women of today are merely the creations of man. Those whom we call the women of today are no more than play-things designed by man. she is not a natural woman – as she should be.

The Western Scientists are carrying out a small experiment in which they are trying out a new method. Tantra has worked on this subject in this country, some 2,000 years ago and discovered that it is possible. In the sex-act, the man is active; if he is not, the act is not possible. If the man is old, or weak or if his genitals become lax, the act is impossible. But in this experiment that is being carried out in the West, the scientists declare that if a man's genitals have become weak and inactive, this does not matter. If the woman really loves the man, as soon as her genitals reach the man's, it silently sucks up his organ within herself. The man has no need to make any effort. If the woman's love is strong, her body sucks up his organ as air is sucked up into an empty space. This is a very astonishing fact.

And if this does not come about the only reason is that the woman does not love this man therefore, her body does not perform the act of suction. Hence all actions of man are aggressive. If a woman loves, her entire biological set up is such that she draws in the man within her.

Lao Tzu says, "This is the mystery of woman, that without doing anything she does all." If man wishes to do something, he has to perform the act. The mystery of religion is also feminine. If anyone sets

out to attain God, he will never attain him. If someone however keeps still where he is and opens the doors of his heart, God enters now and here, this very moment! Those who go far to seek, travel far into the infinite, wander from birth-to-birth, are never able to attain Him for the secret of attaining Him, is to become receptive. We have to leave ourselves open. We should be ready to see that our gates are not shut when He comes. Our love should be a passive awaiting – that is all.

A woman can wait for many births for her lover to come; a man cannot. He does not know what it is to wait, it is missing in his mental make-up. He wants everything here and now – instantly. He wants instant coffee as well as instant sex! Therefore the system of marriage was evolved by man for instant sex is only possible in marriage. A man can never wait. He is fretful, ardent, restive, filled with tensions. A woman can wait – wait till eternity!

In this country, the custom of keeping a woman widow and allowing a man to marry after his wife's death, was not so much to tyrannize them but because the element of her ability to bear and wait was also taken into consideration. This quality of her's was well understood and recognised. A woman can wait not only life-long for her lover but for many lives to come. This trust was put in her by society. So when in India this custom came into practice, it was not only that it was because it was favourable for men; rather as far as I understand, this was a great insult to the male-sex, and a very deep-seated reverence for women that they could be trusted to wait. Since a man could not stay without sex, he was not forced not to remarry whereas for a woman, widow-hood was compulsory.

The compulsion for widow-hood was also because in the awaiting, her female-element revealed itself to the full. The more opportunity she had of non-active awaiting, the deeper became the depths within her. Then her inner mystery becomes more tender and fragrant.

I have read a very astonishing matter which I could not find an answer to. The catholics go to make confessions to their priests. It is the experience of many priests, that when women confess their sins, they undergo a very curious-feeling. This is natural since they are merely priests by profession – trained into priesthood.

The worst thing that Christianity has given this world, is educated priests. No one can be trained into priest-hood. You can train a person to become a lawyer or a doctor but never to be a priest. It is just like the fact that there never can be a trained poet. If a person is educated in poetry, he will at most write inferior verse. Poetry will never flow out of him. To become a priest entails natural capability, attained by sadhana. It cannot be taught. Christianity has, however educated their priests. Anyone can take this training and attain the degree of Doctor of Divinity. Divinity that is attained by a certificate, is no divinity. You cannot decide divinity by a mere piece of paper!

So when women confess before these so-called priests, their confessions become very tempting. It is but natural that when a woman confesses her sins in a secluded place to a priest, it becomes a matter of uneasiness for the man. The woman feels relieved of her burden of sins but the load is passed on to the priest. One statement of these priests is very astonishing. They say they find widows more attractive and tempting. What could be the reason?

Actually if a widow is a widow in actuality, the beauty of her personality increases a thousand fold, because her awaiting makes her female-mystery more mysterious and profound. The mystery in an unmarried girl also, is the mystery of awaiting. Therefore everywhere in the world, there is the

custom of marrying a virgin girl. If a girl is not virgin, you will never have the opportunity to know the Female. Mystery for the mystery in her is already broken. She is no longer deep and mysterious for she has not undergone her full period of awaiting to allow the required time for the flower of mystery to bloom within her. Those societies that laid great stress on the virginity of women have not worried about the bachelor-hood of man. The reason is simple; this makes no difference whereas the virginity of a woman is very essential for there is a beauty in her virginity which is lost after marriage.

This beauty returns to the woman when she begins to be-come a mother for now she stands at the door-step of a greater awaiting – an awaiting for a great mystery to unfold itself. When a woman becomes pregnant, the husband is worried. This is natural, for there is no awaiting as far as the man is concerned; for him it is yet another economic problem. The mother, however, becomes tender. As the child develops within her, the depth in her eyes grows deeper. There is the unfoldment of new elements within her body. The beauty of a pregnant woman is heavy with the Female Mystery. What is this mystery? Passivity is the secret. She has not to do anything to become a mother. The child grows on its own within her. She has only to wait. Actually she has to stop doing anything and just wait as the development of the child progresses within her. She then is simply awaiting, weaving dreams.

If a woman stops all activities in the last months of her pregnancy, she can see those dreams which can be forerunners of her child's future. This is why the dreams of the mothers of Mahavira and Buddha became so priceless. It is said in the case of both Mahavira and Buddha, that before their birth, their mothers had dreams. These dreams occurred every day and in them they could see the signs and marks of their coming lives. If a mother is really a mother and if she is in a complete passive state vis-a-vis the spirit within her womb, she can write the horoscope of her child. No astronomer or priest is required. And if a mother cannot write the horoscope of her child, no one else can, for so much one-ness, so much identity can never be with another person. There is not so much feeling of one-ness between a husband and a wife as between a mother and son for the son is an extension of her very self.

A woman has to do nothing to become a mother. A man has to do a lot to become a father. The mother to be has merely to observe a silent awaiting; and in this silent awaiting, two things are born: one is the child and the other is the mother. This is why, the highest honour and respect that has been given to woman in the East (where the Feminine Mystery was recognized) has been as a mother. This is a very astonishing fact.

People ask me, "You call the sannyasins 'Swami' but you call the Sannyasin is 'Ma' even those who are not married?" Actually the mother is the supreme dignity of a woman. A woman is on the highest pinnacle of her glory when she becomes a mother. Her peak experience is not that of being a beloved or a wife, these are the mere steps that lead her to the peak of mother-hood. Wherever a society has considered the woman to have reached the height of her woman-hood when she becomes a wife, the women have been very unhappy for that is not their ultimate experience. The man of this society is happy for him, his peak is reached when he becomes a husband or a father or a lover. The same is not the case with women however.

The secret of woman's motherhood is according to Lao Tzu, like darkness. There are many more things we should take into consideration:

When a male child is born, there are no sex-hormones within him at birth. His semen begins to be

formed later on. But a girl is born with all the ova within her! All the ova she would need in her life-time are there within her right from birth. A woman is a complete woman from the time of her birth. A man is born incomplete. This is the reason why boys are so restless whereas girls are quiet. There is an uneasiness about boys that is born along with them. The beauty and demeanor of a girl's personality has very much to do with the peace within her. We have to make an effort to make a girl uneasy and we have to make an effort to make a boy relax. This is natural.

Biologists say that the nucleus of the egg from which a female is born contains similar chromosomes – xx whereas the nucleus of the egg from which a male is born are not similar, they are x, y. The elements that go into forming a female are alike, therefore the woman is graceful and shapely whereas man is not. The well-balanced chromosomes give the shapeliness of curves to a woman's body. There is no such balance in the male body. Besides, the female body is made out of 48 chromosomes – the full number of chromosomes from both the male and female egg – whereas the male body is formed of 47 chromosomes.

Biologists say it is the lack of this one chromosome that makes a man so restless and sends him running all his life. He runs from one place to another, from earth to the moon. It is the search for that one chromosome, the lack of which he feels in his lack of perfection.

This balanced, peaceful, patient personality of a woman, Lao Tzu says, is a profound mystery of Existence. God is in Existence, like the making of a woman and not like a man. Therefore we cannot see God, nor can we catch hold of Him. He is present – definitely – but His Presence is feminine-like, as good as not there. The more we try to catch-hold of Him, the more He eludes us, the farther He goes away from us and the more difficult His search becomes.

Existence is feminine. This means whatever manifests in Existence is hidden in Existence from the beginning – just as I said that whatever is to be born of a woman is already present within her at birth. There is no new addition after her birth.

She is born complete. There is growth within her but no addition. This is the reason that she is satisfied in life. Her satisfaction is astonishing or else, she could not have been kept a slave for so long. She is content in her slavery, she is content to live under all conditions. It is difficult to make a woman dissatisfied. It can only be possible if there is any biological change within her. This has happened in the West, where woman has become restless.

When a woman becomes restless, she is difficult to pacify, for this restlessness of hers is very unnatural. This is why a woman does not remain restless but goes mad. A woman is either serene, peaceful or mad. She cannot be anything in between. There are no gradations in her. A man is never very peaceful. nor so insane. He sways within the degrees of restlessness. This is why the most tense conditions do not make him insane and the most peaceful conditions fail to make him completely tranquil.

Nietzsche has made a very thought-provoking statement. He has said, "To my mind, people like Buddha must have had a large proportion of the female-element". Nietzsche has called Buddha womanish. I think there is a deep understanding behind this remark. This is the truth – when a man becomes completely tranquil, he becomes effeminate. This is bound to be. He will become so serene and calm that all the uneasiness, all the restlessness and tensions that are inevitable in a man's being, are all gone – Lost!

This is the reason why the images of Buddha, Krishna and Mahavira are made symbolically clean-shaven. It is not that these personalities had no beard or moustache but these were symbolically dropped from their images, for they no longer gave reference of their character. There is only one image where Buddha is shown with a beard and therefore people say it is a false image for no where else has Buddha been shown with a beard. There is one image of Mahavira that has a moustache shown. People do not take this image to be authentic either. The temple where this image is, is called the temple of the Mustachioed Mahavira. It is however not possible that Mahavira or Buddha had no moustache, no beard. There could be solitary exceptions where the lack of hormones could bring about this condition but that is rare. Besides, it cannot be that the 24 Tirthankaras of the Jainas had no moustaches and no beards! Such a big coincidence is impossible. The absence of these male signs on the faces of Mahavira and Buddha are the symbolic acceptance of the fact, that these personalities had entered into the feminine mystery.

Remember, when I say, 'feminine', I do not mean only 'woman'. It is quite possible a woman may never enter the feminine mystery and a man may enter. The Feminine Mystery is a Sutra of Existence.

Lao Tzu therefore says, "THE FEMALE MYSTERY, THUS DO WE NAME." There is a reason for this simile for it is full of meaning. This mystery cannot be compared to man for this mystery is the Supreme Tranquility. It is so tranquil that its presence is not felt, for a presence can only be felt when it is conveyed.

Therefore, the real beloved is not the one who always makes her presence felt to her lover. When the husband comes home, the wife devises a thousand and one ways of making her presence felt; the husband tries his utmost to ignore her presence – he re-opens the newspaper, he has read ten times. Then all the noises of the house that the woman creates, remain on the other side of the newspaper; it becomes a wall between the husband and the wife. The most authentic beloved is the one who has become aware of the feminine-mystery. She does not let her lover feel her presence at all!

I shall tell you of a wonderful incident in the life of Vachaspati Mishra. His father urged him to marry. Vachaspati understood nothing of marriage. He however, bowed to his father's wishes, taking it for granted that whatever he said was correct.

Vachaspati was engrossed in the search for God. He understood nothing else. If anyone talked about anything, he took it to be a topic of God. So when his father asked him, "Will you marry?" He said, "Yes". Perhaps he thought his father said, "Will you meet God?" and he said yes. Just as it happens with people generally, if a person is seeking wealth and you ask him, "Will you seek religion?" He will think you are asking him about wealth. Whatever the search within, that only rings in our ears. So Vachaspati also heard what was within him perhaps and said yes.

When he was made to sit on the horse to go to the bride's place he asked, "Where are you taking me?" His father said, "You fool! Don't you know you are getting married? Did you not agree to get married?" So Vachaspati thought it was not right to refuse at that moment. Since he had agreed even though without knowing, he took it to be God's wish that he be married.

He returned home with his bride but it never occurred to him that he had brought a bride home! How could he remember for it was not he who said yes to marriage, nor he who got married. He

was engrossed in his own work. He was writing a commentary on BRAHMA-SUTRA. He finished this work after 12 years. For 12 years his wife would quietly light the lamp for him in the evening and place flowers at his feet each morning. In the afternoons she brought his meals and when he finished, she quietly withdrew it. For 12 years Vachaspati had not the slightest awareness of his wife. The wife made no effort to let him know she was there. On the contrary, she took all possible care that he may not, even by mistake, come to know of her presence. She wanted to cause no disturbance in his work.

After 12 years on the night of a full-moon, when his work was completed and Vachaspati rose to go to bed, his wife picked up the lamp to show him the way. For the first time Vachaspati (so the story goes) saw his wife's hand – Now after 12 years, when his work was over and his mind was disengaged from work. He saw the hands, the bangles and heard the tinkle of her bangles. He turned round and saw her and he exclaimed, "Woman! What are you doing, alone here at this time of night? Who are you? From where have you entered, the whole house is closed? Where have you to go, shall I reach you home?" His wife said, "For 12 years, you have been busy with your work. Perhaps you have forgotten – you have been so busy! It is not possible that you should remember. If you can think back, 12 years from now, perhaps you may be able to recollect – I am the woman you brought to this house as your wedded wife."

Vachaspati wept, "It is too late now!" He moaned. "I have already made the vow to leave home when my composition was completed. Now it is time for me to leave! It is almost dawn and I am ready to leave. Why did you not tell me earlier, foolish girl! You should have given me some hint! Now it is too late." Saying this, he wept like a child. Seeing her husband cry, she fell on his feet and said, "Whatever I was to achieve, I have achieved through these tears. I wish for nothing more. Go without any compunction. What more could I have achieved than this, that Vachaspati's eyes are filled with tears for me? I have received more than I deserved."

Vachaspati has named his book BHAMATI. This word has nothing to do with the book. It is his wife's name. He said to her "I can do nothing for you but let the world forget me, let it not forget you. I shall name my book after you." It is a fact, no one remembers Vachaspati but Bhamati is remembered by many. BHAMATI is a wonderful exposition of BRAHMA SUTRA. there is none to equal it. This woman must be having the Feminine-Mystery.

It is my firm belief that she attained so much of Vachaspati in that single moment, as she would never have attained by a thousand other means. The way Vachaspati must have become one with the heart of this woman, no woman could ever establish such oneness with her husband. The Feminine-Mystery, this non-presence of this woman touched the very life-breath of Vachaspati, twelve years – and this woman did not allow him to feel her presence! And every day she lit his lamp, every day she fed him. Vachaspati asked, "Then was it you who placed flowers at my feet each morning? And was it you who put the tray before me and was it you who lit the lamp for me every evening? But how is it that I did not ever see your hand?" Bhamati replied, "If my hand had become visible to you, it would only have meant that my love was lacking, I could wait".

So it is not necessary that all women obtain this Feminine-Mystery. This is only a name given by Lao Tzu for this name is symptomatic, suggestive and enables us to understand this term. A man also can attain this Female-Mystery. Actually, only those can establish their identity with Existence who have thus reached this prayerful awaiting.

The door of this Feminine-Mystery is the original source of heaven and earth.

Whether it is the birth of matter or whether it is the birth of consciousness; whether the earth is born or heaven, everything is born through the mystery that lies hidden in the depths of Existence. Therefore I have said that those who have looked upon God as mother – as Durga or Amba – their understanding is much deeper than those who look upon Him as Father. If God exists anywhere, He is feminine, for man does not have the ability and the patience to give birth to such a vast Universe. That which gives birth to the myriads of stars and moons must have a womb, without which it is impossible.

Therefore the three extensions of the Jewish order – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – have given a very wrong concept of God to the world – that of God, the Father. This is a very dangerous concept for it gratifies the ego of man. Man looks upon himself as established in the form of God but this has no connection with the Reality of Existence. More befitting, more proper, is the concept of a Universal Mother. But this can only be understood when you understand the Feminine Mystery, when you understand Lao Tzu. Else it cannot be understood.

Have you ever seen the image of Kali? She is the mother, She is terrible! In one hand she holds a human skull! She is the mother – Her eyes are filled with the ocean of tenderness. Down below – She stands on the chest of someone! Someone lies crushed under Her feet! Why? Because that which creates, destroys also. Destruction is the other part of creation. Those were wonderful people who conceived this image. They were people with great imagination who could visualise great possibilities. They have erected the image of Mother standing on a dead body! In her hands she holds the head of a dead man, dripping blood. Round her neck she wears a necklace of skulls but She has the eyes of the Mother, the Heart of the Mother from where the milk flows – and yet, the necklace of skulls!

Actually, the Annihilation of the Universe starts from the very place where creation starts. The circle completes at the same point. Therefore the mother gives birth but when she becomes terrible she can also give death. When a woman becomes terrible she becomes extremely dangerous. She has a great store of energy. The energy is the same whether it creates or destroys.

The imagination of those who conceived of the Mother as an embodiment both of creation and destruction was a very far-sighted imagination but together with this it was very deep and very near Truth.

Lao Tzu says, ”That alone is the original source of the Earth and Heaven.” Everything takes birth therein. But remember everything is re-absorbed in the same place. That is the ultimate source also. It is altogether continuous. This Feminine Existence, this passive awaiting empty Existence is never divided. It is continuous – without any discontinuity whatsoever. As I said before, the lamp is lighted and extinguished; but darkness is continuous. Birth comes, life becomes visible; but death is ceaseless. Mountains appear and disappear, the valley remains forever. When the mountains are there, the valley can be seen; when they are no more, the valley cannot be seen but its existence is ceaseless – altogether ceaseless. It does not cease when the mountains cease. Its power is indivisible, indestructible. No matter how much energy is withdrawn from this emptiness, it never decreases.

A man misses, a woman never misses. A man is enfeebled, a woman never.

Those whom we ordinarily call women, they too do not waste away as much as men. If a woman gains the full knowledge of her Feminine Mystery, she can remain established in an immaculate beauty even in old age. This is difficult for man. A man comes like a storm and goes away. If a woman attains to the height of her motherhood, she can remain beautiful till her last moment of existence.

A man can maintain his beauty till the end only if he penetrates the female mystery. This happens sometimes.

In this connection I shall give you another example. We have not made any pictures of Buddha, Krishna or Mahavira in their old age. All pictures depict them young. But Buddha died at the age of 80, so did Mahavira. Rama and Krishna also attained old age but the pictures we have of them are all of their young age. This is symbolic and purposely so. When a person becomes so engrossed and universed in Existence, he is forever young and fresh. He has attained the sutra within him for keeping constantly young: Now he is established indivisibly and ceaselessly in his energy.

”Make use of it,” Lao Tzu says, ”Make use of this constant energy. Make use of this Feminine-Energy and its natural services become available to you.” You must know how to use this energy for its doors are always open to you. This feminine element, is always ready to give, you just be ready to receive.”

”USE GENTLY AND WITHOUT THE TOUCH OF PAIN

LONG AND UNBROKEN, THUS ITS POWER REMAIN.”

Remember, the more gentle you are, the more effeminate you are. The more manly you are, the less gentle you shall be. This is why when a man tries to be gentle, his male elements begin to get less. So a very strange and wonderful happening takes place, as it has happened in America of late. Today the White American’s fear of the Black Negro is not entirely for economic reasons. It is more on the ground of sexuality. The white man has become so gentle that he knows that on the sexual level, his wife would prefer a negro to him. The negro is potentially more sexual because he is coarse and crude and un-gentle. He belongs to the jungles. But a barbaric man has a particular attraction – the attraction of the male, which is very titillating.

A man who is very gentle, becomes effeminate. If a love-story is to be made round Buddha; it would be a very difficult task. A love-story needs a masculine, coarse, lover. And the more crude he is, the more titillating, the more manly. So when a Western film director chooses a hero for his films, he takes care to see that he has hair on his chest and his arms. When he chooses a heroine, she should be without any hair on her body. The man should appear a little savage, a little raw, then the sexual attraction is more. The Negro is feared today and the fear is less monetary and more psychological.

As a man becomes gentle, he becomes more effeminate, more mild and the fun of the thing is; the milder he becomes, the less sexual, he is. Then this process of his getting less and less sexual, becomes the path that leads to the Supreme Mystery of life.

Lao Tzu says, ”USE GENTLY AND WITHOUT TOUCH OF PAIN.” Remember this. It needs a little explanation.

Whenever a man touches a woman, he wishes to give her many kinds of pain. Actually, the love of a man, viewed methodologically, is that of giving pain to the woman. If he wants to show more love, he will press her hand harder. If his kiss becomes more loving, he will bite, he will claw. In the old KAMA-SHASTRAS, this clawing is very much extolled: "He is no man who does not claw his woman till she bleeds." That is a sign of a lover – clawing! If the lover is an expert, he would be like Marquis de Sade. When nails were not effective, he kept knives and forks with him.

The method of a man's love is violent. Therefore, the more he loves, the more violent he becomes. It is a great possibility that if such a man loves completely, he may even murder his wife – all because of love! Such crimes have taken place and the courts have found it difficult to judge these cases where there has been no element of enmity or hatred – rather profusion of love. The man is so filled with love that whilst pressing his beloved, he does not know when he pressed the life out of her!

Lao Tzu says, 'Use gently'. He is talking of this Supreme Truth, which he says, one must handle very gently "... AND WITHOUT THE TOUCH OF PAIN." Let not Existence feel the slightest twitch of pain through you. Then and then alone will you be able to understand the Feminine Mystery. When a woman makes love to a man, she places her hand so lightly on his shoulder as if she is afraid of causing him even the slightest inconvenience of touching him. And that is the secret of a woman. The more her hand touches as if it is not touching, the more loving it becomes. When a woman presses a man's shoulder, she is giving news of the fact that she has stepped apart from the Feminine Mystery and she is aping the man. The woman just lets herself go, she floats in the man's love. She only shows her willingness. More than this, she does not do. She does not even touch a man so that the touch becomes ungentle!

There is a great arising in the West of late. The learned and wise women of the West – if so we can call them – assert that a woman should be as aggressive as a man. When she makes love, she should be as violent. She certainly will become like a man if she inculcates such violence and aggression but she will then undoubtedly, miss the Feminine Mystery that Lao Tzu talks about. We must concede however, that Lao Tzu is much much wiser. His wisdom is the ultimate in wisdom. He talks from the plane where there is a wisdom beyond wisdom, where all intellectualism fails and the Perfect Wisdom is born. He talks from that plane.

This applies to both men and women however.

Let me tell you one more thing in the end. Let not the ladies feel very proud within themselves for there are hardly any 'women' among them. It is a very difficult task to be a woman. To be a woman, is the highest experience. Let not the men-folk be distressed for there is not much difference between them and the ladies. Both have to go a long way. Understand this, that we shall be able to understand Truth only to the extent that we become non-aggressive, awaiting, passive like the Spirit of the Valley; and not if we are egoist like the mountains. We should be humble like the valley, silent like the womb and filled with awaiting. The indivisible, constant energy, resides in that supreme passivity and perfect inaction. Everything is born there-from and everything merges again into it.

Enough for today, rest tomorrow.

CHAPTER 19

Other dimensions of a feminine consciousness: faith, acceptance and surrender

4 November 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

Question 1

QUESTION: BHAGWAN SRI, YESTERDAY YOU TALKED ABOUT THE FEMININE-MYSTERY. WILL YOU KINDLY ENLIGHTEN US MORE ON THE SUBJECT?

Bhagwan Sri: All dimensions of Existence can be divided into male and female dimensions.

The division of man and woman is not on the basis of sex alone. According to Lao Tzu it is a necessary part of the dialectical evolution of Existence. Not only on the body-level, even on the mental-level man and woman are different. Wherever Existence manifests itself, there is always a difference of male and female. What is to be kept in mind however, according to the Lao-Tzu thought is, that the male form is always the temporal form of Existence whereas the female is always the eternal form of Existence. When a wave rises in the ocean, it is momentary. The ocean is present whether the wave arises or not. Femininity is the ocean of Existence.

Therefore the story of the development of mankind as written by the Jews, is completely false, from the point of view of Lao Tzu. The Jews believe that God made man first. Then from the ribs of man, He created woman. Lao Tzu thinks just the opposite. Lao Tzu believes that the feminine existence is the initial existence. Man is born out of this and he loses himself also into this. There looks to be a depth in Lao Tzu's statement.

First and foremost, "A woman can exist without man. Her restlessness for a man is not so extensive. Therefore, if she wishes, she can stay single all her life. Maidenhood will not prove hard on her. But to keep a man celibate is next to impossible, it is a very difficult task.

I have been astonished to find that whenever Sadhus talk to me their intrinsic trouble is always sex. When Sadhavis talk to me, I find they have no difficulty and trouble from sex. Actually, a man's sex is so active, so momentary and recurring that it troubles him all the time and fills him with distress but a woman's sexual desire is not momentary. It is very calm, stable and steady.

You will be surprised to know that the sex-urge in animals, is periodical. For a very-few months of the year animals are troubled by the sex desire. For the rest of the year they forget all about it – as if it did not exist. Man is the only animal that is troubled continuously by the sex urge. He has no period for sex. But even in human beings, the sexual urge of a woman is periodical. There are a few moments when she is filled with sex-desire but for the rest of the time, she is not obsessed by it.

And even in that moment of sex, if the man does not awaken her sex-desire, a woman can live comfortably without it. Her existence is more stable. A man's existence is restive. Therefore we find that men invariably keep going round women no matter how much they try to show otherwise. It is always the man, who goes around woman; in childhood he is always around his mother and in youth around his beloved. His wanderings are always around women. A man is incomplete without a woman, whereas in the woman, there is a kind of completeness.

This I am saying as an example in order that the feminine Existence be understood.

The feminine Existence is very perfect and symmetrical. The circle is complete. Lao Tzu says, "The greater the perfection, the more stable it is." The greater the imperfection, the more unstable it is. "Therefore," says Lao Tzu, "We give the supreme mystery of existence, the name of Feminine Mystery."

As there is a fundamental difference in the body of man and woman, so also there is a fundamental difference in their mental make-up. A man's way of thinking is reasoning, logic. This should be well understood, for this is the basis of the Lao-Tzu concept. A man's method of thinking is logic. A woman's way of thinking is not through logic. It is illogical, we call this intuition. Whatever name we may give, a woman's way of thinking can never be termed logical. Therefore, wherever a man thinks there is always calculation, logic and law. Wherever a woman thinks, there are none of these. there is a straight and direct conclusion.

Therefore there is no dialogue between a man and a woman. All men find it difficult to talk to women for they find them illogical. When he puts forth an argument, she gives a straight conclusion. He has hardly put forth his point and she has reached a conclusion! There can never be communication between man and woman. Every man feels it is useless to talk to his wife for she always has the last word! Then no matter what arguments he puts forth, it makes no difference; for the woman does not listen to logic at all! This angers the husband but it is not the wife's fault. That is not the method of thinking for her.

Things can be thought of in two ways in this world. Either we can think step by step progressively and then reach the solution through a method; or we can take a straight jump and reach the solution. There are no steps in between. The way of intuition, is a direct jump.

We all experience this intuition at times. You see a man, at once you draw the conclusion that it is better to keep away from him. You have no argument to support this. You have not been acquainted with this man but at the very first sight of him, this thought crosses your mind. This decision is sudden and comes as a flash – like the flash of lightning and if you see properly, ninety-nine times out of 100, this conclusion always turns out to be correct. Those scientists who are working on intuition say that if the intuition is pure, it is always right. Reasoning can be wrong but intuition, never.

This adds to the man's distress. He sees that what he says is correct, his logic is right and yet the conclusion drawn by the woman is invariably correct! This increases his anger. All those who have studied the female mind have a great grouse against it, that it offers no logic, does not think methodically and yet jumps to the right conclusion. All her inferences are invariably correct for they are intuitive and come straight from her entire being.

A man's inference arises out of his intellect and not from his whole being. A man thinks before he speaks and that which is spoken after much thought, can be wrong also. If you understand intuition a little, this will become clear.

There is a common sparrow in Japan. When an earthquake is to occur, this sparrow leaves the town 24 hours in advance. The most modern machines devised to foretell an earthquake can give a warning only six minutes in advance and this is of no use. This common sparrow of Japan, however, knows of the coming earthquake twenty-four hours in advance. Since thousands of years, the flights of these sparrows are watched by the Japanese for impending earthquakes. As soon as these sparrows are not seen (and they are in plenty in Japan) the people begin to move out. Now how does this sparrow know about the earthquake?

This bird has no method, no calculations. There is no place where it learns this. Yet, it definitely feels something and it behaves according to this feeling.

Animals all over the world are intuitive. They do many things that are entirely intuitive, there is no logic involved; but they all carry out their various functions correctly. What is this intuition? To be joined to Existence, gives rise to intuition. If this sparrow is one with the atmosphere around it, she will notice the slightest tremble in the atmosphere. This Feeling is not intellectual. Her whole being experiences these subtle vibrations in the air around her.

When a man loves a woman his love also, is mental. It is a matter for thought for him. His love is also calculative. When a woman falls in love, her love is absolutely blind. She never weighs her pros and cons. Therefore there is a marked difference between the love of a woman and the love of a man. A man's love can be today and gone tomorrow. A woman's love does not fade easily. Therefore no rhythm or harmony can be established between a man and a woman. To the mind of a man, a woman is worth loving today and not worth loving tomorrow. The reason for loving her today may not remain the same tomorrow. In fact, reasons change everyday. The woman who looks beautiful today in his eyes and was therefore lovable, may not appear that charming on constant association, for any kind of acquaintance lessens the element of love. The unknown, the unacquainted, is always appealing and attractive. But a woman's love remains the same for there was never any reason connected with her love. That was the call of her whole existence. Therefore, it never worries a woman whether her man is handsome or not. This also is the reason why a man does not care much about his looks.

We all think that a woman's infatuation for clothes, jewellery, make-up, is due to her feminine mind. It is not so. The reason is very different – it is through these that she hopes to gain the masculine eye The focus of attraction for a man is not at all existential, therefore the woman has to make constant arrangements to adorn herself. A man wears the same kind of clothes all his life. He is not bothered, for a woman does not love him because of his clothes. A woman does not care whether a man wears ornaments or whether he is good-looking. She loves him – that means everything to her. If she does not love, nothing else of the man matters to her.

But for a man, it is the other things that matter. The truth is, if a woman sheds all her adornments before the man she loves, ninety per cent of the woman shall fade away in the eyes of the man. Therefore, it is so difficult to love a wife day in and day out for the wife is seen minus her adornments. ninety per cent of the make-up of the woman is gone in the house.

But a woman makes no demands from a man. It is enough for her that he is a man. A woman's love is her only reason to love. Her love is intuitive and has nothing to do with her intellect.

Another thing: her love, together with being intuitive, is complete. Complete in the sense, that her love is born from her whole body. A man's love is not born from his whole body, it is mostly genital. This is why, as soon as he begins to love, he demands sex. A woman can love for years without any sex-desire. The truth is, when a woman loves deeply, the man's demand for sex, actually shocks her. She cannot imagine sex intruding in the moments of deep love.

I am acquainted with the innermost distress of the hearts of women. Without a single exception, their complaint is the man's constant demand for sex. Each woman is in this torment: where love is her attraction, sex is her husband's. Also, as soon as his sex is satisfied, he forgets the woman. This gives the woman a feeling that she is merely being used. There was some stimulation within him that he wanted to throw out. He used the woman merely as a means to get rid of his passion after which she seems useless. But a woman's love is deep, it arises from every pore of her body. It is not genital, it is total.

Anything to be total has to be non-intellectual, for the intellect is but a part of the human personality. This is why a woman does not experience love with her husband as totally and deeply as with her son. The Rishis of old have made a very shocking statement. The Rishi of the Upanishad has thus blest a new bride: "Love your husband so deeply, so profoundly and may you have ten sons and may the eleventh be your husband. The Rishis of the Upanishads say that a woman's love is perfect only when she experiences her husband as her son. Actually, a woman can wholly love her son alone. No intelligence is needed there. She can lavish her love on his whole body and there is no choosing of any part. She sees no form of sex whatsoever in her child and therefore her love is immaculate pure. As long as a husband does not feel to her like her son a woman is never totally fulfilled.

But it is just the opposite with a man. When he begins to feel the mother in his wife, he promptly begins the search for another wife. He desires a wife and not a mother. To be more explicit, he desires a beloved not even a wife, for a wife also becomes a permanent fixture whereas a beloved is not permanent and she can be changed anytime.

The feminine mind is integrated. I am not talking about the mind of all women, mind you. When I use the word woman, or feminine, I am talking of the feminine-Existence – that which Lao Tzu refers

to as the Feminine Mystery. I do not mean that all women are like this. It is only when women are like this that they are really women and only when a man also becomes like this, does he establish his relationship with the depths of existence.

No revelation of the Supreme Wisdom has ever been born out of the intellect. They have all been born out of intuition, then be it Archimedes solving his mathematical problem! He was relaxing in his bath-tub and suddenly, the solution of the problem, which all along was defying all his efforts came to him. He jumped out of the tub and ran out naked on the streets shouting "Eurika! Eurika!" And naked he ran towards the king's palace, for it was the king who had commissioned him to solve the problem.

Archimedes did not solve the problem intellectually. The solution – as if – arose from within him. He had employed no method, no logic. It came to him directly from Existence. The statement made by all scientists about their discoveries since the last 2,000 year, bears one fact in common. They all have observed that the solution they were seeking always came before them in their moment of relaxation – they do not know how.

You also experience this at times. You forget a name. You try very hard to remember it. Then you give up. You sit quiet, smoking perhaps or listening to the radio or reading a paper or digging in the garden. Then suddenly, this name, you were frantically trying to remember, comes up from within you. This is not the work of your intellect.

There was a man in America by the name of Cayce. He used to diagnose a person's illness in his trance. This man was not a medical man and had no knowledge of medical science. Also, when he was conscious he could make no diagnosis or suggest remedies. This man had made a correct diagnosis of 40,000 patients. When a patient came to him, he sat before him with his eyes closed and in deep meditation. Then he would begin to speak and diagnose his illness and suggest a cure. He would prescribe medicines of which he had no knowledge in his consciousness. His diagnosis and cure were always correct.

When he came back to consciousness, he himself would say he was not sure whether the medicine would cure the patient for he had never heard of it.

Many a time it happened, that the medicine he prescribed would be available nowhere. Then after a year or so, it would come in the market. That means when he predicted the medicine it was yet being discovered! This medicine was still being evolved and not yet named when Cayce suggested it, giving it its proper name. A year after his diagnosis, the patient gets the medicine and is cured.

Once just such a medicine was searched all over the world and was not found. Then the patient's family gave an advertisement in a number of newspapers that if anyone knew anything about this medicine, should please let them know immediately, for a person's life depended entirely on it. A man from Sweden replied saying that there was no medicine as such, but his father had patented just such a medicine 26 years ago, which never came into the market. He had the formula which he was sending and they may get the medicine prepared. The medicine was prepared and the patient recovered.

What Cayce experienced, was intuitive and this is a quality of the female-mind – no thinking or pondering but a direct manifestation of an answer. All processes of meditation, lead towards this.

Lao Tzu says, "If you think, you will go astray." Do not think and the answer will come. Stop thinking and await – the answer will come. You have only to wait: the question is within you and you wait. The answer is bound to come. Do not think for what will you attain by thinking? How capable are you? How much can a wave think about an ocean? It is better if it leaves everything to the ocean and awaits for an answer from the ocean.

What Lao Tzu means to convey by the feminine-mind is: "Leave everything. Let Existence answer." Do not bring yourself in, for whatever you bring in, will be wrong. What Existence gives, can never be wrong.

There is a similar story about Lukman. As it is said about Cayce, Lukman used to stand before a plant and go into a trance. Then he would ask the plant in what illness it would be useful. Lukman has given one lac herbal cures in this fashion.

There was no research centre where he could carry out his research. Even when Ayurveda came into being, there were no research centres. But their results hold good even today. These results were arrived at intuitively by persons in meditation.

Sarpagandha is an old herb of Ayurveda. The sadhaka of Ayurveda has been using this herb since the last 5,000 years. It is a sleep-inducer. It has now been proved in the Western Laboratories, that no tranquillizer is as effective as Sarpagandha to induce sleep. It is known in the West as Serpentina, which is an essence of Sarpagandha. Now we have many accurate means for carrying out research which were not available to the people of ancient times. This proves that the method of research in those days must have been different. That method of research was the method of the feminine mind.

The way research is carried on in our times, is the way of the male-mind. Lao Tzu has said that the science of the female-mind is different from the science of the male mind.

The science developed in the West today is the discovery of the male-mind. Logic, dissection, analysis – these are its methods. Break things, tear them to pieces, reason, argue, ponder over it and calculate the result. But these results need to be changed as days go by. If a scientific formula holds good for six months, it has lasted long enough! In six months' time new means and machines are invented which bring in fresh logic and subtler calculations so that the old calculations prove false. The scientists of the West say that it is becoming nearly impossible to write an extensive book on any subject for before you finish, the theories you go by, are proved false! Now only small books are written on science and by and by, these too will stop. Now there are merely periodicals and magazines on science in which the scientist gives his report before they are proved false!

The results arrived at, the conclusions drawn by intuition require no change even in thousands of years. The truths as stated by the Upanishads, hold good even today; and there does not seem to be any possibility of their changing in the future also. What is there in these truths that make them so authentic?

What Lao Tzu says will hold good even in the farthest future. There will be no change required in his statements. Tao – the method of Lao Tzu's attainment must have been something very different. What we attain, is nullified the next day. As all discoveries of man are based on logic, they are

not actual experiences. They are merely mental conjectures. Therefore they need to be changed everyday, for conjectures are never true. This is why a scientist always says that what he says is 'approximately true.'

When you go through the Upanishads, you find yourself in a different world altogether. Read Lao Tzu – he gives no explanation, no reasoning. He says, "The Valley Spirit dies not, ever the same." This is a mere statement without any reasoning. He does not go on to explain why the spirit of the Valley never dies. He makes a plain and direct statement – the Spirit of the Valley never dies, it is forever the same. There is no why and wherefore to his statements for Lao Tzu says that only he who has not experienced himself, needs witnesses and reasoning to prove his statement.

It is said that Mulla Nasruddin was once found in a court of law. He complained to the judge that his wife had attacked him with a pair of scissors and cut up his face as if it were a piece of cloth! The judge was puzzled, "But Mullah," he told Nasruddin, "There is not a single sign on your face to prove your complaint! When did it happen?" "It happened last night," said the Mulla. "But how can it be? There are no marks on your face," said the judge.

"Where is the need for that?" Asked Nasruddin. "I can produce a dozen witnesses to bear me out."

In fact, we only look for witnesses when we have no faith in ourselves. When we have full confidence in ourselves, there is no need for witnesses or any proof.

The Rishis of the Upanishads say, "Brahma is." They give no proof in support of their statement. They do not explain how they have reached this conclusion. They do not even say that those who disagree are wrong. It is a direct statement. If you ask them for proof, they will say: "There is no proof. Our word is enough. If you wish to know, we can show you the way; but we shall not give any reason for our statement." Lao Tzu too says the same. He also says, "The Spirit of the Valley is ever – abiding and you too can experience it. I can show you the way to penetrate into the Feminine Mystery but I shall offer no proof of its existence for I know for certain that it is."

Those who have offered proofs in favour of the existence of God, have no idea at all of His existence. Such people have only strengthened the atheist's hand – for an inference can always. be debated and there is no inference which cannot be falsified.

Nasruddin advised his son who was to enter the University, "Make it a point to learn logic," he told him. "It will prove very useful in the art of dishonesty. If you want to be dishonest you must be an expert logician. Honesty requires no logic."

"Please explain further," his son requested, "For I have no knowledge of logic." So Nasruddin began to explain: "Supposing, two men come out from the chimney of a cottage. One man's clothes are sparkling white whereas the others' are black with the chimney soot. Which one of them will take a bath first?"

"The one who is dirty, naturally," his son replied. "Wrong," said Nasruddin. "And this is why I say, you must have a knowledge of logic. The man who is dirty cannot see the dirt. He can only see the white clothes of his friend. And he thinks: 'If his clothes are clean mine, too, must be clean.'" "Enough!" said his son, "I understand clearly. The man in the white clothes will bathe first for he will

see the soot on his friend's clothes. He too will think that since they both have come out of the same chimney and his friend's clothes were dirty, he too must be dirty!"

"Wrong!" said Nasruddin. "Preposterous!" Exclaimed his son, "Then what is the answer?" Nasruddin replied. "It is wrong because he who knows logic will say 'If both came out of the same chimney, how can one be clean and the other dirty?'" He further told his son, "If you want to prove everyone wrong in this world, you must know logic."

You can never prove anything to be correct by logic but logic can prove anything to be false. In order to prove the authenticity of a thing, experience is imperative. And if we cannot prove the authenticity of a thing by logic, the inauthenticity of the thing is also not very clear through logic for we do not know what is authentic. Then it becomes just a play to prove one's point.

The entire knowledge of the West is based on logic. Aristotle is the father of this knowledge. Where there is logic, there is always analysis: breaking of things into fragments. So the method of science in the West is analytical. Thus they reached the atom – by breaking and breaking matter.

The female consciousness is synthetical. It does not break things, rather it joins them. It says, "Keep adding, keep adding, and when nothing remains to be added, then what comes in hand is the Truth." Therefore, the conclusions drawn by a female-consciousness are all pertaining to the vast expanse and not to the atom. It is this consciousness that has declared: "The whole universe is Brahma alone." The scientist declares the universe to be a conglomeration of atoms; and each atom is an entity by itself. The atoms are not joined; they cannot be. Between each of them is an abyss. They are like particles of sand held together. Is this so? Or is it their method of deduction that brings them to this conclusion – that the universe is a mass of atoms?

He who works according to the method of the feminine consciousness says however: "The universe is One." There is no question of many; there are not even two. The universe is one vast expanse. He keeps adding and when there is nothing more to add all the universe gets accumulated in one.

A woman always thinks in terms of accumulation. A man always thinks in terms of breaking, segregating. This is the male-mind. The female mind is accumulating and where this is 50, the conclusions reached are different from the conclusions reached by analysis.

Remember, where there is analysis, there is aggression. This is why the Western scientists talk in terms of conquering nature. But in the East, people like Lao Tzu say: "We are the children of nature. How can we conquer nature? It would be an act of outrageous oppression on our mother!"

Lao Tzu says: "To talk of conquering nature is foolishness. It is enough that we co-operate with nature and obtain her grace. If we receive her benevolence, that is more than sufficient."

The West has started to re-think on the lines of Lao Tzu. A wonderful book has been written of late in the West; and it is the first of its kind: "THE TAO OF SCIENCE." Now there is a heated debate going on in the West in favour of getting rid of the Aristotlean science and constructing a new science based on the theories of Lao Tzu. Why?

Because this language of victory and defeat is the language of violence, and nature cannot be conquered. It is as foolish and impossible an effort as if my small finger were to set out to conquer

my whole body. It can never win. It can torment itself to no end: and man has thus tormented himself in a vain bid to conquer nature. When man thinks about nature in terms of aggression, is it a wonder then that a man thinks about another man in the same way? Fighting and aggrandisement become their way of thinking.

According to Lao Tzu, wars cannot end in this world unless and until, female consciousness becomes powerful. This appears somewhat true. Women are never keen on war. They never have been. If man has somehow cajoled her into accepting war .and even made her apply the mark of victory on his forehead when he sets out to war, she has never done this whole-heartedly. There have been nothing but tears behind her smile for whoever wins or loses, the woman has always lost. Either she has lost a son or a husband or her beloved. Someone or the other of hers, always dies and so she never stands to gain by war.

No matter what excitement war brings to a man, in the woman's life it strikes a fatal blow.

Women have always been against war; but women have no voice in society, the female-consciousness holds no power. So as long as the male consciousness holds sway in the world, wars cannot be eradicated. A man's mental make-up is such that even if he wants to start a movement against wars, his way of going about it will be war-like. When he starts a movement for establishing peace, his fists are clenched and he carries a stick! His methods will all be that of a fighter.

There was yet another case against Mulla Nasruddin. Two men came to blows. They threw chairs at each other and broke their heads. Nasruddin was present. He was called as a witness in the case. The judge asked him, "Mulla, you were present when this happened. Is it not a matter of shame that you did nothing? After all, they were your friends!" Nasruddin replied, "Your honour, there were only two chairs and these two grabbed them first. All I could do was stand and watch. Had there been a third chair, I would have participated whole heartedly."

He, who is out to save, needs must have a rifle in his hands too. Man cannot think except in terms of a gun. You will be shocked to know what the scientists say. They say that all the weapons developed by man are mostly the evolvement of his genitals! Whether it is a sword or a gun or a knife, they are all contrivances to pierce! They are all phallic – the man-made weapons!

Woman developed no weapons. The very idea of fighting is nauseating to her. Wars are meaningless. The very talk of conquering is ineffective. The female mind, actually, never thinks in terms of conquering but in terms of surrender. Understand this well: the centre of the female consciousness, is Surrender. A man's centre of consciousness is Resolve, Strife, Victory and the like. Even when a man sets out to attain God, he goes about like an aggressor. "I shall only rest when I attain Him!" This is his attitude. He sets out in search of Truth as if he has set out to find an enemy. There is no attitude of prayer but the attitude of conquest.

As we begin to understand Lao Tzu, we shall understand what he says that... "He who surrenders, he who lets himself go, he alone makes a place within himself to attain the Vast Truth. Logic, struggle and strife are the male characteristics. Surrender, the state of non-logic or you may say, faith are the characteristics of the female-mind. Intuition is born only in the midst of faith – in faith and trust. If a man tries to have faith, it does not come naturally to him. If he inculcates faith in order to attain God, that faith is of no value. Doubt always lurks within such a man. Deep within, there is doubt, distrust and outwardly there is trust and faith.

Nasruddin was educating his son in the ways of life. He shows him a ladder and says, "Go right on top!" The son asks, "Why? Where is the need?" "Do not ask," says Nasruddin, "do as you are told." The son obeys grudgingly. When he reached the top, the Mulla stretched his arms and said, "Now jump! Have faith, I am your father. See my hands? Now jump!" Just as the boy jumped, the Mulla stepped aside. The boy fell with a thud and broke his leg. He began to cry.

Nasruddin said, "This is your first lesson in life: Trust no one, not even your own father! If you want to succeed in life, trust no one. The moment you trust, you will lose."

All training of man is such. The world he creates all around himself is a world of non-trust. In this world, there is only strife, enmity and competition. Trust is so natural to a female-mind. But the female of our times is educated by the man. She is made to learn the sutras of male education. Therefore, the women have no idea of the female consciousness. This is why a woman thus educated, becomes more distrusting and doubting than a man. Just as a new convert to Islam goes oftener to the Masjid, so a woman trained in the ways of a man becomes more doubting.

Else, doubt is not the nature of a woman. Simple surrender is her nature. She has not to bring this about, it is in her very nature. To live in trust, is her way of living: it is her manner of existence, her very way of life. Trust is ingrained in every pore of her being. This factor is to be remembered when considering the female mystery.

Lao Tzu's hints are all towards the realm of faith. It is the realm of peaceful co-ordination and co-operation with nature. It is a realm where you flow with nature and not go against it. It is not swimming in the river but rather floating in it. A man jumps in the river with full faith. He makes no effort to swim, he floats. He has no desire to reach anywhere; wherever the river leads him, that is his goal. With such faith, he floats along in the river. Lao Tzu says, "As long as I searched, I did not find Truth. As soon as I stopped all search and just floated, I found that Truth was forever by my side. My search was the impediment and therefore I could not see it."

Lao Tzu used to say, "I become like a dry leaf. I went where the winds took me. From that day, my ego had no place to stand; and from that day I have known what the supreme Truth is. Now there was no unrest, no restlessness. All restlessness was the restlessness of the search of reaching somewhere. All restlessness is the outcome of trying to be something. The man of faith is happy with what he is, where he is, the way he is.

It is not that he does not travel. He too travels; but his journey is together along with the journey of the whole existence and not in opposition to it. A wisp of straw that flows with the river, reaches the ocean some day. It is not necessary to ride a boat in order to reach the ocean. The floating wisp of straw also reaches the ocean and it is the river that takes it, it does not go itself. It saves itself the trouble and trails of reaching itself.

Lao Tzu says, "If we can let-go of ourselves as a woman lets herself go completely in love; if we give ourselves away to Tao, to the universe, to Existence, to God as a woman in the arms of her lover, then we easily reach up to the Truth of Existence."

There are one or two things more:

There is a difference between the male mind and the female mind. In the same way, there is a marked difference in their way of living also. The male dimensions of living, is time. Man lives in time. Existence has two dimensions, one is time and the other is Space. Man lives in time. He keeps an account of the past and an account of the future. He lives like the hand of the clock. As the Western science began to hold ground, clocks became popular. Clocks were never invented in the East and the :reason was simple. The East never thought with the male mind. The East never kept an account of time.

We do not know the date of Rama's birth or of his death. We do not know when Krishna was born, when he died. We also do not know when Lao Tzu was born and when he died. We do not even know who was born first and who after. We kept no chronicle. Actually, time-consciousness was never a factor in the Eastern way of living. Why? Because a male mind is required for time-consciousness. The consciousness of time, increases with tension. As tension rises, time increases. As anxiety rises, time-consciousness increases.

Time-consciousness has reached such a peak in the West that they keep account of even one second. This leads to a great deal of foolishness at times. A man goes running to catch a plane for he wishes to save one hour of his time. He saves one hour but: he never thinks what he is going to do with this hour. He will use this time he has saved to save another hour and then that hour to save another hour. Thus saving his hours, he ultimately dies and is never able to make use of the time he saved! For making use of the hour, he should be without any tensions. There is tension in time – sharp tension, where tomorrow is more significant than today.

For the women, today is of great significance – here and now. Therefore, it is an interesting fact, that women take interest in things here and now. You will be surprised to know that women never have any long drawn-out worries. She never worries what the world is going to be in 2,000 A.D. She never worries whether there will be a third world war; or what will happen in Vietnam or in Bengal. There is no place for time in a woman's thoughts. She is least worried what is happening in Peking or Washington!

But for a woman, what is happening in the neighbour's house, is a matter of great importance, whereas what is happening in Washington has no significance at all. She will put her ear to the wall to know of all the goings on next door. She has an Immediate consciousness. She is not concerned with the distance and time. Her whole interest is in here and now, no matter how trivial the happening; perhaps a quarrel between husband and wife or a son being reproved by his mother – whatever it is, it is nearby.

The most trifling thing is precious to a woman if it is here and now. For a man the most precious thing is of little value if it is in the present. The farther a thing, the greater the opportunity for his mind to extend. The greater the distance, the better the scope to ponder, to plan, to argue. When a happening takes place near you, where is the need to think over it? So man is very much interested in far-off affairs whereas woman is interested in here and now.

To be interested in the proximate is much more important in the search for Truth than interest in the distant. I am not advising you not to keep interested in your neighbour's affairs. Interest in things near and around you, is very precious for life is so very close to you! The nearer you feel the feeling of Existence, the more fresh and alive it will be. With time and distance, it gets stale and old. Then only the ashes remain or the dreams of future.

Man lives in time, woman in space. Perhaps you are not aware of the fact that a home is a woman's creation. Left to man, he would never settle down in a house. A house keeps a man tied to the proximate and distant journeys become feeble. Man by nature is a vagabond, a gypsy. He loves to wander – as far off as he can. Hence the wanderlust in man.

Now, a woman cannot understand why mao is so eager to go to the moon. What will we do there? There are no shopping centres etc.! And after all what is all this for? Astronauts are the most celebrated people in America but you will be surprised to know that the race of divorce among them is twice that of ordinary citizens, for those whose interest lies in the distant lands cannot possibly find interest in their wives!

A woman is troubled even when you read a paper in her presence – you have gone far away from her. Therefore wives hate books and they also dislike your playing games. She is troubled – there she is before you and you walk off to the play field? And even when he comes back from the moon, his interest in his wife is hardly worth the name. He has developed such a keen interest in distant things that he is no longer interested in things near to him.

A man is always on the move. The house is made by the woman and therefore she is known as the lady of the house though it is your money she spends. She is owner of the house. She fixes the nail and you feel tied to it. I was reading an autobiography of a person. He says, "I was in a dilemma. I could not decide whether I should marry or I should not. If I married, I would become tied to one place. I shall not be able to move from there. If I did not marry, I cannot go about wherever I pleased but then there is no place where I could rest!" If man had his way, he would keep wandering, like the wandering nomad tribes.

Have you ever observed the women-folk of these nomads? For instance the Baluchi women. They are almost like men. They have to wander with their men-folk and the inevitable effects of wandering result in them also. It is not in a woman's nature to wander. If she does, she will have to develop the mature of man. Therefore, the Baluchi woman is more of a man than the Baluchi man. She can fix a dagger in your chest with the greatest of ease. If she catches hold of your hand, it is difficult to shake it off.

Now if the Baluchi woman becomes like a man, our men become almost like women – remember this! He has to live tied to his house and his woman. Therefore a man is always irritated by his wife for she appears to be the cause of his captivity. When we send wedding invitations and we say our son is being bound in the bond of affection to the daughter of so-and-so, it is correct. Marriage is a bond for the man. He gets tied, he strikes roots in captivity and thus his personality gets stunted.

Early in the morning one day, Mulla Nasruddin met the doctor. "And how is your wife, Mulla? Did she sleep well?" The doctor asked him. "What a wonderful medicine you gave her doctor! She sleeps well and she feels well too," replied Nasruddin. "Have you anything to ask?" The doctor inquired. "Only this," said Nasruddin, "When will she get up? It is five days now that she is asleep and Oh, the peace and freedom, now that she is asleep!" "What?" The doctor exclaimed, "Five days? Why did you not inform me, you foolish man? I hope you did not give her an over dose?" "That I did not doctor," Nasruddin replied, "you had said to give her the powder as much as can be placed on a four-anna piece. There was no four-anna piece, so I took four, one-anna pieces, placed the medicine on them and gave her. So much peace in the house, I tell you. Go where I like, come when I like, there is not a sound in the house I; I had never known such peace in all my married life."

A man feels bound. If he runs away from home, there is trouble, if he does not, he feels a captive. Man's whole-hearted desire is in the distant. It is not also that once he reaches there he will be satisfied. We have hardly stepped on the moon when the scientists are busy planning journeys to Mars. The moon has already been dripped – as if the chapter is closed. Now it is imperative to land on Mars. Why? No one questions.

The people of the Upanishads, people like Lao Tzu, the people of India and the East have never been bound by time-consciousness. There was no concept of time, no concept of the distant. Lao Tzu used to say, "I have heard from the elders the my village that there was a village across the bank of the river. Sometime in the silence of the night we heard their dogs barking. At times when the skies were clear, we saw the smoke rising from their chimneys. But never was anyone ever keen to find out who they were."

I was reading the life-story of a Catholic priest. There is an order of Trappist monks. It is perhaps the most difficult order of monks in the world. Once a man enters a Trappist monastery and becomes initiated in its Order, he never goes out again. He goes out only if the Guru throws him out or if he dies.

A new Sannyasin was initiated into the Trappist Order. The Guru told him, "The outside world is closed to you forever." He was given a cell to stay and taught the rules of Sadhana. One of the rules was, that the sadhaka could speak only once in every seven years.

After seven years, the sadhaka went to his Guru. He told the Guru, "I have no complaint except that my window-pane is broken. When it rains, the whole cell gets wet. Besides, mosquitoes and insects come through the window? I have not slept even once in peace. As I have to speak only once in seven years, I request you to get the glass fixed." The Guru said, "Alright, it shall be done." The glass was fixed accordingly.

After another seven years (that is fourteen years hence) he again stood before the Guru. "Everything is alright. The glass has been replaced but the mat I sleep upon has become hard due to seven years of rain. Kindly have it changed. I haven't slept a wink all these seven years." The Guru said, "Alright, it shall be replaced."

After yet another seven years (that is in all twenty one years), the Sadhka came again. "Everything is alright but the men who came to replace the mat, broke the window-pane as they carried the old mat away. I have not slept at all for the last seven years.

"Get out of the gate!" The Guru shouted. "In all the twenty-one years you have done nothing but complain. Get out! We do not give sannyas to people like you who do nothing else but complain!"

These are people belonging to a different world altogether. We cannot endure the slightest discomfort even for twenty-one minutes. Twenty one years is a long period. In seven long years, he brings one complaint and yet the Guru says it is too much! time-consciousness is not allowed at all or else seven minutes would be difficult to pass.

Time-consciousness increases with the male mind. Women have no concept of time. Therefore we find quarrels every day in households. The struggle is between the male and female mind. The

husband sits in his car harking away and the wife is engrossed in her make-up. They have missed a train or the theatre and the husband is in a rage. "Where was the need to take so long to dress?" He shouts at her. Actually, a woman has no concept of time. It is not her fault. She replies, "So what if we are half an hour late? What is the hurry?"

A woman's car stopped in the middle of the road. It would not start. The driver of the car behind her kept on sounding the horn. She got out of her car and went up to him and said, "Gentleman, my car will not start. Will you please start it for me. Meanwhile I shall sound your horn for you."

There is no haste in the disposition of a woman.

Lao Tzu says, "The secret of the female consciousness – non-haste, patience, lack of time-consciousness – these are helpful steps in the direction of Truth." One thing you must always remember. When I talk about female-consciousness, I mean. female-consciousness only. It has nothing to do with women A man can also possess a female-consciousness. A person like Buddha has a female-consciousness, he has no concept of time.

It was 40 years that he had attained knowledge when Buddha died. As he lay dying, one of his disciples addressed him thus, "Your grace was unabounding. Your compassion infinite! You had no need to live after attaining knowledge. You could have faded away like the flame of a lamp. You could have attained Nirvana; but out of compassion for us, you lived 40 years." "Forty years?" asked Buddha of Ananda who was sitting by his side, "Has really so much time passed?" He had no concept of time.

Woman lives in space. Her mind dwells in space. Space is spread here and now. Time spreads out in the past and future. Space is spread in the present – here and now. Woman has a good knowledge of space and whatever little work has been done by women, has all been done in space. If she makes a house or designs furniture or decorates a room or wears a dress or ornaments it is 'spacious'. Their shape and form is all in space. She is not established in time.

Man is not interested in these matters. He considers them too trivial. His interest is all in time. He ponders over how Communism can be brought about. Karl Marx spends 40 years of his life in a British Museum Library thinking of ways and means of bringing about Communism. Now Marx never lived to see his dream fulfilled. There was no way of fulfilling his dream in his life-time. Yet he plans and plans – let someone else bring it about or let it not come at all he is not concerned with that but Marx works himself to bones in this project.

Marx would leave the library when he fell unconscious due to sheer exhaustion of reading and writing. Almost every day he was taken home in this condition. His wife would plead with him, argue with him; no one was ever prepared to print his book. There seemed to be no use in the work he had undertaken. When ultimately his book was sold he got just enough to cover the expenses of his cigar – and the way he toiled, the insults he bore! He would be thrown out of the library for he did not budge even at closing time. And for what – all this?

His was a dream of the future – Someday Communism will come. There is no knowledge of space in here. No woman would ever do this for she is joined to here and now. There is no knowledge, no experience of time within her.

Lao Tzu believes that if the knowledge of time is lost, you can attain the female consciousness. Therefore Sadhakas all over the world have declared that meditation is attained when time is extinct. Someone asked Jesus what was the special thing about his heaven and Jesus replied, "There shall be time no longer."

There shall be no time. All anxieties come with time. All desires come with time. All passions are born out of time. All expectations of results are born out of time. With time the kingdom of our happiness arises – somewhere in the future, not here and now.

Therefore, if we keep in mind the qualities of a female consciousness, it will be easier to understand the following sutras.

Enough for today, the rest tomorrow.

CHAPTER 20

Blessed are those who are ready to be last

5 November 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 7: SUTRA 1 & 2

LIVING FOR OTHERS

1. HEAVEN IS LONG ENDURING AND EARTH CONTINUES LONG.

THE REASON WHY HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE ABLE TO ENDURE AND CONTINUE THUS LONG IS:

BECAUSE THEY DO NOT LIVE OF, OR FOR, THEMSELVES.

THIS IS HOW THEY ARE ABLE TO CONTINUE AND ENDURE.

2. THEREFORE THE SAGE PUTS HIS PERSON LAST,

AND YET IT IS FOUND IN THE FOREMOST PLACE;

HE TREATS HIS PERSON AS IF IT WERE FOREIGN TO HIM; AND YET THAT PERSON IS PRESERVED.

IS IT NOT BECAUSE HE HAS NO PRIVATE AND PERSONAL ENDS; THAT THEREFORE SUCH ENDS ARE REALISED?

There are two ways of existence.

One way is to live as if I am the centre of all Universe. To live as if the whole world has been created for me; as if I am God and all the world is subservient to me. This is one way of living. The second way is exactly the opposite of this: To live as if I was never the centre of the Universe, rather, I am a point on its circumference. To live as if, all the world is God and I its mere servant.

These two ways of living are the difference between a religious and an irreligious man. The irreligious man considers himself to be God and all the world his slave. He lives as if the world is created for his exploitation alone. A religious man lives quite contrary to this – as if he is not. The world is, he is not.

These two ways of life have two different results.

Lao Tzu says, "HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE LONG ENDURING" – eternal. Their life-span is very long. What is the reason that they exist so long? It is because they do not exist for themselves. The more a person lives for himself, the more tense he becomes. His life is filled with anxiety and distress and these in turn will shorten his life. Anxiety shortens life, enfeebles it. The less a person lives for himself, the more free, burdenless, without tension and more relaxed he will be. If a few things are explained, this sutra will be easier to understand.

A child in the mother's womb, sleeps for nine months. When he is born, he sleeps for 23 hours and keeps awake for one hour in a day. Then gradually, he sleeps for 22 hours, then 20, Gradually his sleep gets less and less and his waking period becomes more and more. When a man is middle-aged, he sleeps for eight hours, then six, then four. In old ace, he cannot sleep for more than two hours. Perhaps you have never thought why a child needs to sleep more and an old man less?

When life creates, self-remembrance should be completely absent. Self-remembrance becomes a hindrance in the development of existence. As the child develops within the mother's womb, nature keeps it asleep so that the child does not become ego-conscious. As soon as this thought comes within the child, the development begins to be hindered. The 'I' becomes a burden on existence. As ego develops, sleep becomes less and less till in old age, it is almost gone. Now death is close and there is no further development in life. Rather, life is now about to fade An old man can remain awake all the twenty-four hours but a child cannot.

Doctors say that if a patient cannot sleep, it is difficult to cure him. So the first thing they attend to is the patient's sleep. If he sleeps well, the illness can be cured. Why? Tn sleep he forgets his 'I'. For as long as he forgets the ego, life becomes light, weightless. Then all the processes of life can work unhindered. If a man cannot sleep when he is ill, his sleeplessness is more dangerous than his malady for anxiety will surround him all the twenty four hours.

You feel fresh and cheerful after your eight hours' sleep in the night. The reason is only this, that you were free from your ego for eight hours. If man has taken pleasure out of intoxicating drugs, the reason was only this: he needs must forget himself at times for with so much anxiety and so much ego, it is impossible to live otherwise. Alcohol and drugs cannot be banished from the world until such time as the whole world becomes ready for meditation.

There are only two ways of being rid of the ego. Either you drown yourself in meditation, so much so, Lao Tzu says that you stop living for yourself, or you forcefully make yourself unconscious by

chemical drugs, the 'I' cannot be annihilated by intoxicants. It can only be forgotten for some time. As long as it is forgotten, you feel nice but as soon as the effect fades away, the ego stands up with double vigour. It will take its revenge for being suppressed so long.

As man's ego increased, the world had to invent many more means to become unconscious. The more civilized a country, the more intoxicants it has. Now we have had to discover new things like marijuana, mescaline, L.S.D. Man wants to forget himself somehow. Why after all, does a man take so much trouble to forget himself?

Lao Tzu says, "This Creation is so eternal for it is not aware of its existence. The space above is so enduring because it exists for others and not for itself." We exist for our own selves. The more a person lives for himself, the more he will be tormented, the more confused and insane he will become. Our madness and confusion is directly related to the radius of our existence. The more a person lives for others, the lighter he becomes. He (so to say) develops wings and soars in the sky! And if a person forgets his ego completely, he is unaffected by the gravitations of life. He has no roots in the soil, now he can fly, a free bird, in the skies. Such people have been called free, liberated, in the East, whose lives are not egocentric.

I told you that sleep makes you feel light. This is because you forget your ego for that much time. I also said sleep does not come in old age. This is because, the ego is so dense, so crystallized, that it does not allow sleep to come. The mind is so weighed down that relaxation becomes impossible.

We however, know about quite another type of person, who does not feel the need to sleep! Krishna has said in his GITA; "Such an awakened person, is awake even in his sleep." Buddha has also said: "Now I sleep, but this sleep pertains to the body only and not myself." Mahavira has said, "As long as sleep remains, know you have had no experience of the Atman."

There is another kind of awakening when there is no need within for sleep, for there is no ego within that makes sleep necessary. When there is no ego within, there is no tension within. When there is no tension, there is no need for sleep. The body tires, so it sleeps but the consciousness keeps awake. The consciousness within keeps a watch: it sees sleep descending on the body, spreading over it; it sees sleep departing from the body and the body getting out of sleep. Someone within is constantly awake and watching.

You must never have thought of this. Have you ever seen sleep coming to you or departing? If you have, you are a religious man. If you have not, you are not a religious man. Religion has nothing to do with how many times you go to the temple. It is not concerned with how many times you read the Gita or the Koran. The criterion is different and that is: have you seen sleep coming to you? You can only observe this phenomena if there is someone awake within at the time of the coming of sleep. How else will you see it? Sleep comes and you are asleep; you awake only after sleep is done. When sleep comes, you are not present – who will then see? When sleep leaves you then also you are asleep – who will then see? Sleep and you never meet. This means, you fell asleep. When sleep comes, you become so unconscious that no part of you stands aside to witness the happening.

He who cannot see sleep descending within him, cannot also see anger arising from within him, for the same state of sleepiness pervades within before the rising of anger. It is only after anger has left

that he will be able to see it. Then he will be filled with remorse. He however fails to see the initial stages of anger. He who manages to see anger in its initial stage, is liberated from anger. It is the same with sex. When it arises first, we do not see it. He who identifies it in its first stage, is rid of sex.

All arrangements of life, like for instance our own life, is all based on a trance. We live in a trance; and the centre of this unconsciousness, is our ego.

Lao Tzu says, "Nature is eternal for it lives not for itself." He who has no thought about himself, will not live for himself. We all live for our own selves. There is an astonishing statement in the Upanishads: "The husband does not love the wife; through her, he loves his own self. The father does not love the son; through him, he loves his own self. The mother does not love her daughter; through her, she loves her own self". The Upanishads say that when we say we love someone then too, it is our own self that we love through that medium. Even when we say we live for others, our statement is not authentic. It is erroneous; for the one we allege we live for, today we might feel to kill tomorrow.

I say, "I live for my son". If tomorrow this son disobeys me, displeases me, goes against my wishes, I will create a thousand obstructions in his way. I will see that I cause him all kinds of hardships in life – and I used to say I live only for him! As long as he gratified my desires, obeyed all my commands, nourished my ego, he was an extension of my ego and I professed to live only for him. If I say, "I live for my wife". I can only do so when she satisfies my desires; when she is an instrument for the gratification of my passions, my very shadow. Let not this delude you though. I only live for her as long as she is useful to me. The day she is no longer useful, she becomes redundant for my ego. I will then throw her out as we throw away articles that have outlived their use. She becomes so much trash for me.

But we swear we live for others. As long as there is even a vestige of the ego within us, we cannot live for others. Then no matter how much we proclaim, we live for ourselves alone.

One person says, "I live for my country, I shall die for my country." This is absolutely false. No man lives or dies for a country. He dies for 'my country'. In that too, is the fulfillment of his own ego. If I am a Hindu, I can die for the Hindu religion. But supposing in the last moments before I am executed, I am told I am not a Hindu and that I was actually a Muslim brought up in a Hindu family, all sacrifice on my part becomes useless. That very moment my whole attitude will change. I was not going to the gallows for the sake of Hinduism, but because I was under the illusion that I was a Hindu, my ego was Hindu, and in dying for Hinduism, I was only gratifying my ego. Now today, this gratification is gone. The matter finishes. Now I shall curse myself for my foolishness.

As long as ego persists, whatever we do, ego will be the master. Try to understand this well:

We do many things, thinking the ego has nothing to do with it. But as long as there is ego within us, whatever we do will be related to the ego. We can implant humility on ourselves. It will only become an ornament for our ego and remain as such. I may fall at your feet and feel myself to be the dust on your feet. The ego within however, will keep reminding me that there is no one more humble than myself. My ego will exploit this humility and strengthen itself on it. Ego can even renounce. It can renounce everything but it will always save itself. It never dies.

A man like Lao Tzu says, ”Life eternal can only be attained when you begin to live for others”. But I can live for others only when there is no ’I’ within me; or when I begin to see my own self in others. These two happenings are the same. If I begin to see my own self in others it is the same as when my ’I’ is annihilated. The happening is the same whether I begin to see myself in others or the ’I’ within me becomes extinct. Though this statement seems paradoxical, I repeat: I can exist for others only when the other is no longer ’the other’ to me. As long as the other is ’the other’ to me, I cannot live for others; till then I live only for myself. The very feeling of the other being the other, is a feeling of the ego within me. Or else, how will I know the other to be the other? Only when the other does not feel as the other to me, can I live for him.

We can express it this way also: I should spread out so, that everything and everybody becomes my own self. If I live in this manner, my existence becomes free, without anxiety, it is without any burden; it is an existence of freedom in which our bonds with the eternal are cemented. Till then all our relationships are with the temporal. There is nothing more transitory than the ego and hence all its connections are with the momentary.

Ego is somewhat like this: If we take the explanation of Buddha – Buddha has given the same meaning to ego and atman. Buddha says, ”The ego and the atman are like this: we burn a lamp at night and we put it off in the morning. We think we are putting off the same flame that we had lighted the night before. This is wrong. The flame dies every moment and is reborn every moment. It is only that we do not see the gap in between. One flame turns into smoke and goes upwards into space and another takes its place. Then this one burns off and is replaced by a third. This continues in a series and it happens so fast, our eyes cannot catch the gap in between. A series of flames keep burning and fading the whole night. The flame we put off in the morning is one of the flames in the series; and this was not there at all in the evening.”

Buddha says that the ego also, is a series. This series also works at such speed that the ego looks one whole. It is just like a movie film. When the film is shown in slow motion, we can see the action in detail. If a man is shown lifting his hand, it takes a thousand different pictures in series to show that motion. Then these are projected with such speed that we see the hand going up.

The pictures taken in a motion picture are all static. these static pictures are projected with such speed that the picture comes a movie.

When you see pieces of these films, you will be surprised to see so many pictures taken in series, of the same pose. The difference between each picture is so insignificant that we can hardly detect it. Now if we take a motion picture of a man coming down a ladder, you will not be able to make out where the man is. There is a picture by Picasso, of a man coming down a ladder and he has shown a thousand legs and arms and heads all mixed together and coming down the ladder. If our vision can keep pace with the speed of the film, we shall see not the man but the movements. If you then watch a film of my hand rising up, you will not see the hand but the figures and formations of the hand from the bottom to the top and it will be difficult to envisage what it is all about. We cannot see the intermittent gaps and hence we can see the hand.

Ego is a film moving at great speed. Ego is born every minute just like the flame of the lamp. Therefore you do not always have the same ego. It changes a thousand times in twenty-four hours and takes a thousand forms. If you concentrate just a little and slow down the speed of the projector

of your mind, you will be able to see this. You are sitting in a room, your boss enters the room. Is your ego now in the same state as it was when your servant entered the room in the morning?

The truth is you hardly notice the movements of the servant. If he is new, you may notice him but if he is an old servant and you are used to him, you do not notice when he comes and goes. It is good in a way or else, his constant coming and going may disturb you. The servant comes, sweeps the room and goes away. You keep sitting as you were. There is no difference in your gestures. If the servant had not come, you would have still sat in the same manner.

But if your boss steps in, everything will change. You are then, not the same person. You would get up and be ready to welcome him. If you were sad, you would now smile. Your ego takes a different form altogether in the presence of your boss. Before the servant it takes a different form and before a friend, yet another form; with a stranger it will take another form and yet another form with an enemy.

Your ego has to change all the twenty-four hours but it changes so fast that you cannot notice the change. It changes in a split second.

The ego is not an object. It is a continuous happening that takes place between relationships. It is an event and not a thing. If you are left alone in a jungle, your ego does not remain the same as it is in a town for the conditions that produce the ego in the town are not the same as in the jungle. If you are left in the solitude of a jungle, you are not the same person you were amidst the bustle of a town.

This is why people feel a sense of comfort and relaxation and peace in a jungle. This peace does not belong to the jungle. It is because the conditions around you are different from the conditions in a town. If a man can create conditions to escape the ego, he can be outside his ego even at Chowpatty in Bombay. But you have to go to the jungles, to the Himalayas for it is only then that you are away from the conditions of a crowd. The fuel that your ego received in the town, is not available here. But then, how long can this last?

You are the same old person. If ego is your habit, you will create new egos. The convict in a jail, begins talking to himself. He divides himself into two and answers his own questions. There have been cases where captives talk to lizards and spiders; give them names too and talk on their behalf! You may laugh but you do not know that you too would do the same for it is difficult to save the ego in solitude. Then you take the help of even a spider. It is not that the ego can be propped up with the help of a palace only. The oil of a loin-cloth is enough to burn the lamp of the ego. If required the ego can make use of your loin-cloth and feel just as much at home as it would if you owned a kingdom. There is no qualitative difference. There is only a quantitative difference.

I have heard that once the great King Akbar came to visit the river Jamuna. The person who took him there was the head-priest of the temple on the banks of the Jamuna. Verily there was a competition among the priests to get Akbar to visit the Jamuna for they expected high rewards. Everyone was jealous of the man who was ultimately chosen for this privileged job. A great crowd gathered.

After having gone around and seeing everything, Akbar bent down and picked up a broken coin that was lying on the road and gave it as a gift to the high-priest. The Brahmin touched the coin to his

forehead and closed his fist so that no one may see what he had received. No one knew what the Brahmin received from the king. All the village was eager to know what the emperor had given. They gathered round him and asked. The priest replied, "The king has given me such a thing that will not diminish for generations to come."

A broken coin cannot be spent however.

The news spread to the royal palace. Akbar was asked what it was, after all, that he had presented to the priest? The courtiers were filled with jealousy for the Brahmin said for generations his children will be free from want for the gift cannot lessen. The king also was perplexed for he knew the coin was useless. He too began to wonder whether there was something in the coin! He had picked it up from the road. Perhaps it was very precious. He could not sleep at night. Even his wives began to pester him – what was it so precious that he gave to this Brahmin?

The Brahmin turned out to be a clever person. The king had to send for him. He came happily. "I laud my good fortune," he said, "What a gift your Majesty gave me! It will never be spent for generations to come!" The king took him alone to a room and asked him, "What is all this about?" "Nothing your Majesty," he replied, "You are very kind." Akbar tried all means to get the secret out of him. It was difficult to get anything out of a person who had caused such a commotion over a false coin. The more he asked the more the priest folded his hands and said, "Your Majesty's compassion knows no bounds. There have been many kings but no one ever gave such a present. There have been Brahmins before who have received gifts but never has such a gift come to the hands of a Brahmin as I have received."

This is a historical fact. In the end Akbar begged him to tell him the truth. "I thought I had given you a false coin. What is it that you got?" The king asked. The Brahmin replied, "If the ego is skilful, it can raise a kingdom even on a false coin. That I have done. The doubt I created in your mind made even you envious of me though you knew very well it is a false coin you gave me."

The ego is clever. It can raise a kingdom on a false coin. We have nothing to stand our ego by – not even a counterfeit coin; and yet we raise kingdoms on it! If we cut ourselves off from all our relationships. we feel the emptiness for a few days. This is what happens when we go to the mountains and quiet places. But within a few days, the mind begins to establish new relationships. It will collect fresh oil and the flame will burn once again. One thing you must remember however, the ego has to be created all the twenty-four hours. It is not a thing that is. It is like a man who pedals a bicycle. As long as he pedals, the cycle goes; as soon as he stops pedalling, the cycle stops. It may run for a while with the momentum or if it is on a slope but ultimately it will fall.

The ego works only if you keep working on it all the twenty-four hours. You have to do nothing to destroy it. Stop working the ego and that is enough. Generally people ask how to destroy the ego. If you think in terms of destroying, you will start pedalling again – devising methods and ways. This does not destroy it. But teachers all over the world say, "Destroy the ego!" for they read people like Lao Tzu. It is easy to read but difficult to understand. On reading only one thought comes to mind – If the ego. is destroyed, life becomes eternal and we attain immortality.

Greed catches hold of our mind. Greed – not Knowledge. Greed – how to attain the nectar of immortality. How to attain that life where there is no death, no darkness. How to attain the eternal

consciousness? Greed catches hold of us. It is this greed that tells us, "Lao Tzu says there should be no ego". Then this greed asks, "How is the ego destroyed?" Then we begin fresh endeavours to destroy the ego.

One person leaves the house, another leaves his wife; yet another renounces wealth, another casts off his clothes, casts away his friends and relations. Then we begin to cast off everything and run away thinking perhaps this way the ego will be destroyed.

The illusion of renunciation comes from our belief that we should cast off all that which enhances the ego. When I pass a hut, my ego swells for I own a palace. So foolish people advise, "Leave the palace and the ego will leave you." These fools do not know that now when you pass the hut the ego that stands behind you is even greater. Now you look upon the hut-dweller as a sinner who will rot in hell for he cannot even let go of his miserable hut! And here I am – I have left a palace. This man who renounces the palace, collects fresh fuel to light his flame. It makes no difference.

No one's ego is because of the palace. Albeit, palaces are raised on the ego. Ego can stand on any prop. So the real problem is how to stop the ego that forms every moment. Ego has no substantial existence that can be done away with once for all. It is formed every moment. We feed it every hour, we water its roots and thus strengthen them. It gives out fresh leaves every day. This is the result of our effort.

When we sleep at night we feel light and fresh in the morning for we do not feed the ego in our sleep. The pedal stops working for the night and we feel the lightness in our being in the morning. It is a different man who gets up in the morning; even his face is different. If any favour is to be asked of him this is the best time of the day. By afternoon, everything becomes confused and disorderly. That is why beggars come for alms in the mornings – never in the evenings. They know the psychology: if you have slept well at night, you may be in a benevolent mood in the morning! There is no hope from you in the evening for by then you will have pedalled so much that your ego stands firm and strong.

Invariably people come to blows by evening. They either go to sleep fighting with their wives or with someone else. This is a kind of disquietude. Throughout the day, the ego gathers strength. It burns sharply and creates a lot of smoke around it. If this smoke is too much, sleep may become difficult due to the acute tension. This tension will penetrate within and prevent the muscles from relaxing. The more a person gets civilized the greater his ego becomes and the lesser he is able to sleep.

There is nothing substantial about the ego. According to Lao Tzu, it is a happening. It is not quite correct to call it a happening also. It is perhaps better defined as a series of events. If this series is broken from anywhere, the happening is destroyed there and then. The truth is, we should not give it fresh strength and fresh momentum. How do we give it new strength and acceleration? What is the method?

The method is – all the twenty-four hours we are finding ways and means of nourishing the ego. We are forever finding fresh fuel for its flame; and to this end we apply many means. The most outstanding is: in what way can I attract the attention of others? This is the most effective fuel for the ego – that people should look at me; that I should be the cynosure of all eyes. This is why politics is so powerful. The world is fast becoming more and more political-minded and the reason is, nothing attracts the human mind as much as politics.

Many people who commit murder, have confessed that they killed only so that their names may appear in the newspapers – in big prints! His only ambition is that his name may be printed in red, that his picture may be printed in papers, that all the world may see him, hear of him! What pleasure does this give him? When a thousand eyes look at you, your ego gets fresh fuel. The attention of others becomes the food for your ego. There is a very subtle intoxication in the eyes of others and when these eyes look at you, your ego derives a strange pleasure from it and it gains fresh momentum.

If ego has to be annihilated there is a different method: Concentrate on the other. When you concentrate on the other, you feel a lightness within you. What we call love is nothing but the focussing of our attention on another. When you are in love with someone, the mind feels very light. When the beloved is near you, you feel absolutely unburdened. You feel you have developed wings and will soar away in the skies! This is because your attention is focused completely on the beloved. Here the conditions are absolutely different. Now you are anxious about another. When a mother looks at her child, she forgets herself completely.

Attention is a one-way traffic. You can either be attentive towards yourself or you can be attentive to someone else. When your attention is centred on the other, you forget yourself. When your attention is centred on yourself, you forget the other.

We however, are always endeavouring to gain the attention of others. We invent a thousand ways to this end. One person wishes to be a king, so that people may look at him. Another person wishes to be a president for the same reason.

If this is not possible a man even tries nefarious methods only to gain attention. If he cannot find a good method, he will use a bad method. He becomes a murderer, a hooligan, a rogue. Students in schools and colleges create mischief just for the sake of attention. The most mischievous boy is made the prefect of the class. That is the only way to stop him from mischief; for the reason of his mischief was to show to others that he is and this is satisfied when he is made the captain of his class.

The youth may choose a correct path to this end. If this is not available he will choose a wrong path also. In America today, there are hippies and beatniks and a hundred other complexities. The most significant reason for this confusion is the new hierarchy that has risen there – the hierarchy of status, wealth. The youth there today cannot hope to reach the top place. He has no hope of becoming a Nixon or a Ford or a Rockefeller. But he can wear unusual clothes and go out on the road. He can live in dirt and filth – so much so that even Nixon is constrained to pay attention to him. Whatever the youth is doing, is merely to gain attention. Ego demands attention. If it does not come by right methods, it will employ wrong ones.

You must remember one thing, whenever you demand attention, you are pedalling your ego. This needs must be remembered. When you enter your house and your son forgets to greet you, you are pained. This pain is not because you feel the boy has become mannerless, disrespectful. These are mere rationalizations. The actual pain is the lack of attention. Now if even the son does not pay you attention, what next? All the world seems to ignore you for now even your son does not bother about you!

Parents have always remained most satisfied in India because they have made very good arrangements for themselves. As soon as it was morning, the first thing a son was supposed to do, is to touch his parents' feet. This kept them satisfied for the day. This was the daily routine. It was not much that the son had to do and it kept the parents satisfied. The parents in the West will have to devise some way for there is no such arrangement there; though the demand for respect is just the same. This causes trouble. When the father enters the house, he expects the rest of the family to be conscious of the fact that the head of the family has arrived. The mother also expects recognition so do the other members of the family, even the smallest child!

One story of Nasruddin goes that once, when he was yet a boy, he was sitting on the road-side, smoking. An old woman happened to pass by. She stopped and said, "Child, does your mother know that you smoke?" Nasruddin blew rings of smoke through his nose and said, "And does your husband know you stop on the road and talk to strange men?"

The smallest child desires attention, Mothers are always perplexed that the otherwise quiet child raises Cain when there are visitors at home! What could be the reason? When the children are alone by themselves and there are no strangers around, they play quietly but as soon as someone comes they indulge in all kind of mischief. Actually, the children demand attention from the visitors. It is as good as their saying, "We also are here". How can they convey this? They throw things, they make a noise, they fight, they cry. A moment ago, the mother asks them to eat their dinner but they said they were not hungry. Now when someone has come to visit, they suddenly feel hungry! They are not actually hungry. Their egos are learning to pedal. They are endeavouring to gain attention.

This childishness exists from childhood to old age. If you remember this, Lao-Tzu's sutra becomes easy to understand. "Do not demand attention from others". He who demands attention from others, creates the momentary ego. But then its existence is momentary. When Lao Tzu says, "Live for others", he means that you focus your attention on others. As soon as you centre your attention on the other, a transformation begins to take place in your life.

Then you can laugh for the foolishness of others becomes apparent to you. When you centre your attention on the other you see his ego kindle and burn. This is what was happening to you also, till late. But now you can have pity on him. As your attention on the other becomes deeper and deeper, you find you have become extinct to the same extent. As emptiness spreads within you – as the attention centres on the other, a person becomes empty within – you realize for the first time what the condition of tensionlessness is like.

When Freud became old someone asked him, "You treat the mental illness of others from morn to night. Has this not affected your mind?" Freud replied, "I never had time to think of myself". It is difficult to go mad without paying attention to yourself. He says, "From morning I plunge into the troubles and anxieties of others. In the night I fall asleep worrying and thinking of others. Where do I have time to think about myself?"

This is why usually great scientists become tranquil, for their whole attention is taken up by something other than themselves. Their attention is focused on their research. This was the trouble with Einstein. He forgot his own self. Sometimes he sat for six hours at a stretch in his bathroom. His wife would come and knock time and again. She too did not have the courage to disturb him for who knows what thoughts he was lost in!

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia went to meet Einstein. His wife gave him the appointment but said, "I am giving you the time but I cannot promise you will meet him." Dr. Lohia said, "It is with great difficulty that I shall be able to make it; but I cannot spare more than an hour myself." His wife said, "I shall try my best but Einstein is most unreliable."

And it also happened that way. Dr. Lohia went. Einstein's wife told him to sit down. Einstein had just gone in for a bath. He came out after five hours! When Dr. Lohia asked him what he was doing, he replied he was engrossed in a problem.

So if the attention is concentrated on a problem, then Einstein is no more, the bathroom is no more; where he is, that also is no more! As soon as the mind gets concentrated on anything, the ego is cut off. This is why great scientists became egoless, Great painters, great dancers, became egoless, whereas great renunciates find it difficult to be. The renunciate's whole attention is on himself. He is always worried about what he should eat, what he should not eat; what he should wear, where he should sleep, what he should do. All his attention is on himself. He calls himself a renunciate but he is very much ego-conscious. I shall do this, I shall not do this; all his attention is centred around himself. Therefore very often the tragedy happens that renunciate cannot be freed of his ego. More often than not, ordinary persons whom we look upon as pleasure seeking people are freed from their egos easily.

The secret however is one only. If your is less on your own self, your ego is starved to that extent. the more your attention goes outside of you the more egoless you become.

Therefore Lao Tzu has said, "HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE ETERNAL". There immortality is due to the fact that they do not live for themselves. Therefore they are ever-abiding. Their extinction is not necessary. Ego alone becomes extinct. There is only one thing that is mortal in this world and that is the ego. This is a little difficult to understand.

In this world neither is matter ever destroyed nor the Spirit, only ego is destroyed. The body is never destroyed. This body of mine was, even when I was not. Every particle of this body was present. There is nothing new in it. When I die, not a single atom of my body will die with me. The body is eternal for nothing within it dies. Scientists say that we cannot destroy a single atom – nothing can be destroyed. Everything within the body is eternal: the water will merge into water, the fire will be lost in the fire, the space will become one with space; everything is eternal. Only the shape is lost; but nothing within the shape is lost. My spirit also does not die – then what dies?

Death happens. Only the connection between the body and the soul breaks. And in between this connection there is the ego, which I create through the meeting of the body and the soul and which I create every day – this ego breaks. Once I come to know that I am not the ego, then there is nothing within me that can die. As long as I know myself to be the ego, I have no knowledge of the nectar within me. I cannot possibly know – there is no way of knowing for I am completely identified with my ego. Then nothing except death can happen to me for the thing with which I have identified myself, is the only thing that dies. This seems to be an astonishing statement.

In the whole universe, only one thing is capable of death and that is the ego. Nothing else dies for nothing besides the ego is born. All other things are. Ego alone is born, it is a bi-phenomena. Just as for example: I am walking on the road. The sun has come out. When I was not walking on the

road, the sun still was in the sky. It is midday and the sun is right above and the road below. I sit in my house; I am and so is the sun. Then when I come out into the light of the sun, a new phenomena takes place – that is my shadow. Where was it all this time? When I sat within my house, it was not there in the house nor was it anywhere under the sun. When I came into the light of the sun, it appeared as a by-product of a relationship between me and the sun. This shadow is destructible. As soon as I step aside or the sun moves away, it shall be lost. Even now it is not and if I think I am the shadow, the shadow is my being, I shall find myself in difficulty, just the way a fox did, I am told.

Early one morning, a fox came out. The sun was just rising in the sky. He saw that his shadow was very long. He thought to himself, "I shall need one full camel for my meal today." He gauged his size according to his shadow. There were no other means either for him to know. So when he saw his long shadow he was convinced that he was a big animal. So he set out in search of a camel. It was now midday but he could not find a camel. He was feeling very hungry but there was no food. He then turned round to see how his shadow was faring. The sun was right overhead. The shadow had now shrunk to a very small size. Then he thought "Well, now a small rabbit will do."

He who lives by his shadow always finds himself in difficulty. Sometimes the shadow looks very big – it is mere coincidence. In youth the shadow appears very big to all, for then the sun is just rising. Nasruddin used to say that when he was young he had decided that he would not rest till he became a millionaire. That was his firm resolve. He was telling this to his friend who was a beggar. They were both beggars. The beggar-friend looked at him thoughtfully and said, "Then what happened?" Nasruddin said, "Later on I realized it was easier to change the resolve. So I changed it."

This is what happens to everyone and there is a reason for it: the shadow has shrunk and even a rabbit would do. When a man gets old he realizes that in youth the shadow was long and that was only a coincidence. In old age it shrinks and becomes small. Those who know, know also in youth that the shadow is merely a shadow and not himself. In just the same manner, there is a shadow within which is the ego. The ego is the inner shadow. The various relationships of life cast a shadow within which is called the ego. and I measure myself with the yardstick of the ego. I decide who I am according to my ego and every day I have to change my decision for it depends entirely on coincidence.

One man comes in the morning and says, "Yar! There is no one like you on the face of this earth!" The shadow within. expands immediately. The secret of flattery is only this. The most interesting thing is, no one realizes this is flattery for flattery is so gratifying – it elongates the shadow. What we cannot enlarge by hard work, flattery inflates in no time.

It is said that once Nasruddin was sent by the Sultan as his emissary to the King of India. It was a difficult commission for him. He was representing his king to the King of India. He went to the palace and stood before the king and said, "Glory unto you, the perfect full moon!" Now the ambassador of his country was present at that time. He was furious. He at once sent a message to the Sultan apprising him of Nasruddin's doings. Why, he had insulted the Sultan by calling this king the full moon! The king was angry with Nasruddin. On his return from India he sent for him and asked for an explanation.

Nasruddin said, "Your Majesty, you are the moon of second night. You will grow more powerful day by day. This king has reached the height of his power. Now he is the waxing moon, his end is near."

The Sultan showered him with gifts. The king of India had also showered him with gifts. In one place he flattered the ego by addressing him as the full moon. In the other he flattered the ego by calling him the moon of the second night. Man is so feeble he can be deceived by either. We are always ready to be flattered. The most ordinary looking woman will be taken in by you if you say she's the most beautiful woman you ever saw. She will not take the trouble to consult the mirror, she will believe you implicitly.

Nasruddin was sitting with his sweetheart on the sea-shore. His sweetheart tells him, "You are so much like the sea! Whenever I look at you, I am reminded of the sea. Whenever I look at the sea, I think of you." Nasruddin was elated! He said, "Forsooth, you are right! The sea also is so vast and so raw and so romantic – just like me!" "Forgive me!" His sweetheart cried out, "It is not that. I feel sick when I look at the sea and I feel sick when I look at you! That is the only thing common between you two."

Say anything to anybody and he is ready to believe you. What absurd things people readily believe! you tell a woman her eyes are like the fish – she will believe you. No one's eyes are like the fish! You say her lips are like a rose-bud, or her body is fragrant with the scent of roses. All these things are not true but everyone is ready to believe. Poets sing about it and people listen and accept their words. Ancient hackneyed stories are told and retold a thousand times over and yet their charm is unabated. Why? The inner-shadow of the ego is gratified by it.

We have to be alert and awake towards this inner shadow. So Lao Tzu says, "He who is awake and alert towards this inner-shadow establishes his relationship with the reality of Truth; and he who remains bound to this inner-shadow, his relationships remain with all that is mortal and momentary." This sutra has been carried further into the next sutra and explained more extensively by Lao Tzu.

Therefore the saints keep their person last. Jesus has said, "Blessed are those who are able to stand last." Why does Jesus make this statement? Why are they blessed who are ready to be in the background? For Jesus says: "Whether you know or you do not know, he who stands last becomes first." There is nothing that carries more dignity, there is no attainment greater than this. He who has lost his ego, there is no way of bringing him back even to a second position. He is always first, without making any effort to be first! Now he will have to stand first.

If Mahavira and Buddha gave up their kingdom it was not that this would lead them to egolessness; rather it is that he whose ego is annihilated has no longer any need to be a king. Now he is a king! Now it makes no difference where he is, in what direction he is. All this is irrelevant. Now Buddha can take the begging-bowl and go from door to door but nowhere in his eyes will you find the beggar. If ever there has been a Beggar in the world, it was he – Buddha. He is the one who has asked for most alms!

Now actually, he is so unconcerned about the majesty of his princeliness that the begging-bowl brings no change in him. Remember – he is so unconcerned about his majesty! The fact of his kingliness is so real that even if he begs, it brings no change in his dignity. We are afraid to beg, not because we are afraid to beg but because if we beg we are bound to become beggars. We have no knowledge of the King within us. No sooner we beg, we become beggars! As our actions, so we are! Mahavira and Buddha could ask for alms with the majesty of an emperor! There was a reason for this: They were so confident. The day they put themselves last, it became their very nature to be first!

Lao Tzu says, "And hence saints put their person last and yet they are found at the very head of the line." They wipe themselves out completely, withdraw themselves in from all sides and yet history bears out that they were always in the forefront!

Do you know the name of even one king who ruled in Bihar at the time of Buddha or of a politician of those times? They are all lost – faded, wiped off! And one beggar came and stood in front, in all his splendour! Buddha's father when he saw his son in a beggar's attire, was deeply hurt. He told him, "People toil for a life-time and yet fail to attain such a palace as you inherited from your ancestors; and you turned your back on such a vast and glorious kingdom? You are really foolish!" If anyone remembers the name of Buddha's father, it is because he was Buddha's father and not because he was a king. Thousands like him ascended the throne and went away. If this king's name is known today, it is entirely because of the fact that his son set out with a begging bowl.

Buddha left his father's kingdom and went away because everyday people came and begged of him to return to the palace. He went to the kingdom of the neighbouring king thinking no one would trouble him there. But when the king of that country came to know, he came running to him. He told him: "You are foolish. If you are angry with your father never mind. Come to my palace. I shall marry my daughter to you. My kingdom shall be yours for I have only one daughter." Buddha replied, "I have no grouse against anyone, much less against my father. I am only trying to escape. To escape my father I came here but here you come with the same proposal. Have pity on me, leave me alone. What you offer me has no value in my eyes".

There is a priceless statement of Buddha. He said, "As long as I had no knowledge of the treasures within me, all outside things seemed valuable. Now since I have found the diamond within, all earthly diamonds have paled into insignificance.

Lao Tzu says, "WE FIND HIM YET, RIGHT IN THE FOREFRONT." History is filled with crowds of people in which each is eager to be in the forefront. Then suddenly all the politicians, all the kings and men of wealth fall in the back line and somehow, as if mysteriously, these people who had kept themselves in the background are found right in front!

It is some 2,500 years since Lao Tzu tread the earth. So many people have come and gone within this period but not one has ever stood before Lao Tzu. And this man was such, he kept himself absolutely in the background. There was no question of standing behind him. He made himself the last! Before his death he left China, so that they may not make his samadhi (grave). Since he had not made any mark in his life-time why should there be any mark left of him after death? But such a one who wipes himself out completely could not be so easily forgotten by us. Centuries will pass but Lao Tzu will be forgotten.

He is right when he says, "THE SAINTS KEEP THEMSELVES AT THE BACK, YET THEY ARE ALWAYS FOUND IN THE FRONT."

But you do not lag behind so that you can be found in the front! Some of you may think this is a good device! Be last and come in front! Those who keep themselves in the background are found in the foreground but those who keep themselves back only to come to the forefront remain at the back. There is no way for him to come in front. There is no cause and causality here. It is only a consequence. Remember this or else you will err. This appeals to the mind. The ego urges you

saying this is very good – to be in front without doing anything! This is not so. To be right at the back means, you have no wish, no ambition to be in the front.

Therefore the second sentence, "It is not linked causally", is not the result of the first statement – that you put your hand in fire and it shall burn. It is not like this. This is the consequence. Do not think in terms of mathematics – that be at the back and you will find yourself in front. This will never be. To be at the back means – one who has shed all thought of being in front. He then does not know whether he is in front or whether he is behind. He is unaware of where he is.

They are indifferent towards their own power yet their power is secure. They neglect their own selves completely, they forget themselves. They do not worry about themselves and yet they are well protected. Actually, as soon as a man lays down the burden of his own self, God is ready to pick up his burdens. As soon as a man decides to lay aside the worries and anxieties of his person, the whole Existence begins to worry about him. When a man decides to handle his anxieties himself, Existence stops worrying about him. He is then alienated. He becomes a stranger to all existence and for no reason he goes about carrying his own load.

Since these people have no selfish ends, their goals are realized. These words are the most paradoxical words that have ever been spoken in this world and at the same time, they are the most valuable. Each word spoken here can become a Bible. Lao Tzu says, "Since they have no self-interest all their interests are satisfied " What he means to say is that the supreme bliss of life is the very interest of life.

He who renounces the ego, attains the supreme bliss. Fear ends when a man renounces his ego, for with ego there is fear – fear of extinction, fear of defeat, of failure. All these fears are, now no more; and where there is no fear, there is complete security.

We do the opposite. The more security we arrange for ourselves, the more insecure we become. The more we try to save ourselves. the more fearful we become. The more we try to save ourselves the more we find we are losing ourselves.

One last thing and then we shall talk tomorrow.

Have you seen a whirlpool in a river? If you throw anything in the whirlpool, it goes round and round and then is pulled down by the whirlpool. If you are caught in a whirlpool and you do not know the philosophy of Lao Tzu, you will be in difficulty. If you know Lao Tzu, you can save yourself. When you fall in the whirlpool, it is but natural that you will try to save yourself. You will resist the whirlpool and refuse to be screwed down by it. The more you fight the more energy you will lose, because the enormous strength of the whirlpool is against you. It will break you. Soon you will be tired, spent. Then it is difficult to save yourself.

Lao Tzu says,"If ever you get caught in a whirlpool, do not fight with it. Be prepared to be sucked down by the whirlpool." Then your energy will not be spent. The whirlpool draws a man down very quickly. Now the whirlpool is broad at the top and narrow at the bottom like a screw. Once you are down there is no difficulty in getting out. You came out of it automatically. You have not to do anything.

You must have seen living people drowning in water and dead corpses floating on the river. Have you ever thought why? Corpses float and a living man drowns! It sounds very paradoxical. The living person makes a tremendous effort to save himself. In this, he spends himself and thus has no strength to save himself. It is not the river that drowns the man, or the whirlpool. A man drowns by sheer exhaustion. The corpse offers no resistance. It allows the waters to take it wherever they will. Then the Ocean lifts it up. It does not fight and so is lifted up!

Those who learn swimming actually learn the art of a corpse. The clever swimmer lets go off himself like a dead man in water. He does not work his arms and legs and the water does not drown him. There is no compromise, no understanding between the swimmer and the sea. He has only to know the method – the method of a dead man. What is meant by the method of a dead man? He must give up all fear. He should take himself to be dead. Then he floats on water.

Lao Tzu says: ”Those are secure who have no anxiety for security; who have embraced fear and do not escape it. Those who stood right behind are right in front. And those who are prepared to become extinct, to die, have received nectar as their attainment.”

Enough for today. We shall take the next sutra tomorrow.

CHAPTER 21

The nature of water is very much like Tao

6 November 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

CHAPTER 3: SUTRA 1, 2 & 3

WATER

1. THE HIGHEST EXCELLENCE IS LIKE (THAT OF) WATER.

THE EXCELLENCE OF WATER APPEARS IN ITS BEFITTING ALL THINGS, AND ITS OCCUPYING, WITHOUT STRIVING (TO THE CONTRARY) THE LOW PLACE WHICH ALL MEN DISLIKE. HENCE (ITS WAY) IS NEAR TO (THAT OF) TAO.

2. THE EXCELLENCE OF A RESIDENCE IS IN (THE SUITABILITY OF) THE PLACE;

THAT OF THE MIND IS IN ABYSMAL STILLNESS;

THAT OF ASSOCIATION IS IN THEIR BEING WITH THE VIRTUOUS;

THAT OF GOVERNMENT IS IN ITS SECURING GOOD ORDER;

THAT OF (THE CONDUCT) OF AFFAIRS IS IN ITS ABILITY:

AND THAT OF (INITIATION OF) ANY MOVEMENT IS IN ITS TIMELINESS.

3. AND WHEN (ONE WITH THE HIGHEST EXCELLENCE) DOES NOT WRANGLE (ABOUT HIS POSITION), NO ONE FINDS FAULT WITH HIM.

Where does excellence reside?

Normally, when we think of the excellence of a person, we do so with regard to his status, his wealth or his fame. Forever the reason is outside the individual. If the status is no more, if the fame or the wealth vanishes, the excellence of the man vanishes with it.

Lao Tzu says: "That excellence which can be taken away, is no excellence." The excellence which depends on some outside object, is the excellence of that object and not the person. If I have wealth and hence my excellence, that excellence belongs entirely to my wealth and not me. If I hold a position, my excellence is entirely due to the position and not me. If my excellence is because I possess something that makes me excellent, that is not my excellence. If I am excellent without any reason, only then am I excellent.

Lao Tzu says: "Excellence lies in the person of an individual, and not in his attainments, rather in his nature." It does not lie in what he has but rather in what he is. How are we to measure this virtue, what criterion do we have? We can measure the wealth of a person, the height of his position, even his renunciation and also his learning. We can also find out how good or bad he is or how popular he is but what criterion can we have to measure the excellence that resides in the very being of the man?

No one can be excellent through an outside reason. Lao Tzu is very right when he says this. The truth is, that those who hanker after these outside virtues are the most third-rate people. When a man toils to seek excellence through wealth, one thing is proved that he has gained no virtue within himself. The same goes for a politician and for those who aspire to rank and position. When a man seeks excellence outside of himself, it goes to show that he experiences quite the opposite within him.

A great psychoanalyst of the West, Adler, has given a doctrine to the West, which can be called a substitute for Lao tzu's theory. He has said, "Whoever strives to be superior is inferior within." So a very interesting phenomenon takes place. Those who experience on inferiority-complex within themselves strive and attain position, wealth in order to be acclaimed among the excellent. They want to prove to the world and hence try their utmost for recognition outside.

I have heard that once, a follower of Adler who was himself a very great psychologist, was delivering a lecture in a town. He said, "Those who are poor within, seek wealth outside; those who are cowards, weak, seek valour outside and become great warriors too. Those who are shallow within seek profundity without". Nasruddin happened to be there. He got up and said, "Pardon me sir, may I ask in that case that those who become psychologists are mentally weak or inferior?" This too, is possible. This is not a joke; it is quite possible that those who are eager to know the working of the minds of others have a deep sense of pain and depression within their own minds. In fact, whatever we set out to do, is because of some reason within us.

Lao Tzu says, "Virtue resides within us." It is in our very selves, in our nature. But how shall we know this virtue? How do we recognize it? We are only acquainted with one kind of excellence which Lao Tzu says betrays the poverty within the man rather than anything else. Lao Tzu says there is a way of knowing. "THE HIGHEST EXCELLENCE IS LIKE THAT OF WATER!" This is the criterion.

The nature of water is, that it flows to the lowest level without making any effort. It is its very nature – to flow to a lower level. Leave it on a mountain and soon you will find it in the valley below. And for this, it has to make no effort. It does not have to do anything about it. It merely slips from a higher level to a lower level. So it falls in the valley. And if there were pits and hollows in the valley. it will easily glide into it also.

Lao Tzu says: "The supreme excellence is like the water." An excellent man, seeks the lowest level, he does not seek the heights. Why? This seems to be a strange characteristic. No better symbol has been put forth in the 2,500 years following Lao tzu. This is the ultimate definition of excellence of virtue. What is the reason? Let us view this from another angle and then we shall be able to follow it.

A lowly person always endeavours to reach a high position. Given the opportunity he will not miss it. He will try his utmost even if he does not get an opportunity. All his life he strives at going up – and up – and up! Then be this dimension of any kind: wealth, status, fame, knowledge, renunciation – it makes no difference. An inferior man can even declare to attain God and swear not to rest until he can proclaim "I am God!".

According to Lao Tzu, the ambition to reach the ultimate state of God-hood is against the nature of water. It can be compared to the nature of fire – to give an example. The flame always goes up. No matter how much you press it down, it rises up as soon as you lift the pressure. Fire never goes downwards. If we hold a lamp upside down the flame will still go upwards. If you want to direct the flame downwards, you will have to make a lot of effort. You will have to press it down very forcefully. If the ego has to be forced down, it requires a great deal of labour. The water however, flows down naturally. If you wish to direct it upwards, it will need a lot of labour on your part. You will have to make arrangements to pump the water up. Even then, on the slightest opportunity, the water will flow down.

This characteristic of flowing down is, according to Lao Tzu, the chief characteristic of Excellence. Only he will be prepared to go down, whose excellence is so indisputable and definite that it is not destroyed by going down. He alone is eager to reach the top who knows that if he remains at the bottom, he will be considered low. If he rises up, he too will be termed excellent. The inferiority-complex within, goads him to go up and up. If there is excellence of virtue, within, a man likes to lose himself in an abyss. Why? Why this talk of going deep into an abyss? Because there is no competition, no struggle there; no one is willing to go there.

I have heard that once a man approached Nasruddin and said, "I want to settle down in your village and play my trade honestly." Nasruddin replied, "You are welcome. There is no competition in our village, for all tradesmen are dishonest."

Lao Tzu says, "That intrinsic excellence stands where there is no struggle." And there is no struggle till the very end. Therefore excellence seeks the ultimate background. That alone is its shield of protection.

The King of China was after Lao Tzu, that he should become his prime-minister, for a wiser person than he, was difficult to find. Had he just accepted the post, that was enough to raise the king's prestige sky-high. The king's men dogged Lao-Tzu's feet. Lao Tzu would leave the village as soon as he came to know that the king's men had arrived in search of him.

With great difficulty, Lao Tzu was caught. He was sitting on the bank of a river catching fish. The captain of the king's party approached him with folded hands and said, "You do not know why we are following you! The king has ordered that you be given the place of the highest honour in the kingdom. You are to become the prime-minister!" Lao Tzu sat quiet, without a word. The leader of the party thought, he had not heard. He shook him and said, "Don't you hear what I say?" Nearby in a hollow filled with slush, there was some movement. Lao Tzu said, "Do you see that hollow? What is there in it? Why is it moving?"

The leader and his party went up to the puddle and saw a tortoise wallowing in the slush.

Lao Tzu says, "I have heard that there is a tortoise in the palace of your king which is covered with gold". The gold-encrusted tortoise was the emblem of the king of China in those days. "You have heard right," said the headman. "If you were to ask this tortoise to come with you to the palace, be covered with gold and be worshipped once in a year, do you think he will agree?" Asked Lao Tzu. "Or will he prefer to stay in this slush and be free?" "If he has any sense," replied the headman, "he will remain where he is; for to be encrusted in gold is to die. Then what use will all the worship be to him?"

Lao Tzu says, "I have at least as much understanding as this poor tortoise! Please go. I'm happy in my slush. Do not try to encrust me in gold; for then I shall die." In fact, to be encrusted in gold add to die are one and the same thing. No one can be encrusted in gold before he dies. The higher the post you want to attain, the more dead you have to become. The greater the wealth you want to achieve the more dead you have to be. It is difficult to climb up without becoming dead. All heights are suicidal! The excellence of water lies in its benevolence towards others and in its humility because of which it occupies with ease, the lowest place, which we look down upon. This is why the nature of water is akin to Tao.

Lao Tzu says, "Tao means religion; Tao means nature; Tao means form. The Supreme Law of Existence is Tao. This order of water is very near Tao. He who attains Tao, he who attains this supreme excellence, also like wise prefers to be at the lowest, to be the very last in line. He stands in the shadow where he may not be seen. He is in the very last line of a crowd, where there is no scuffle, no jostling and whenever someone comes, he leaves his place and goes further backwards."

There are two types of people in this world: those who go in front and those who prefer to stay behind. The latter are born once in. a while – same Buddha, same Lao Tzu, same Christ. Those who surge forward, their number is great.

Nasruddin went to a meeting. He was late and so there was no place in front. He had to sit on the doorstep. He was very restless for he was used to occupying the president's chair. Soon he began to talk to the people around him, He began to tell stories. More and more people became interested and in a few minutes, all the crowd turned round towards him. The president of the meeting now sat facing the back of the crowd. He called out to Nasruddin and said, "What is this Mulla? I am the chairman of this meeting!"

Nasruddin replied, "I know of no status. I only know this, that wherever I am, that is the president's chair. A meeting can go on only in two ways: either I am the chairman or there is no meeting." He had to be called to the chair. Then the meeting proceeded.

Nasruddin said, "Wherever I am, that is the place of the president". That is exactly the desire of everybody. We wish to be the centre of the whole world and all the suns and stars go round us. Therefore when Galileo said for the first time that it is not the sun that goes round the earth but it is the earth that goes round the sun the whole of mankind was rudely shocked. This shock to mankind was not because of either the sun or the earth but because of the fact that the earth that was considered by him as the centre of all universe, was not the centre!

Man always thought the earth to be the centre of the universe and that the sun, moon and stars, revolved round it. My earth! Man's earth! So Galileo gave a rude shock to man. He says, "The sun does not go round the earth. It is the earth that goes round the sun; and this sun is a satellite of bigger suns. We are not the centre then!"

Yet man was quite confident of his position. Till the time of Darwin, he thought God had created him in His own image. Thus did man write about himself. If donkeys were to write a treatise on the evolution of the earth, they would say God created an ass in His own image! They will not be prepared to believe man's version. So since books are written by men, it is said that God made man in His own image – he is his supreme creation. But Darwin with his theory, created a lot of difficulties. He said there was nothing to prove that man is the image of God on earth. According to his findings, man has evolved from the Ape! This was a rude shock to man's ego. The opposition that Darwin had to encounter was not because he had said anything wrong but because it was a blow to man's ego.

In this century Freud is the third person who has shaken man's ego once again. Man always thought he was a rational being. Freud said: "It is difficult to find a creature more irrational than man." Whatever man does is irrational but his cunning is that he covers it up with rationalisation. So he seeks excuses for what he wants to do.

If he wants to fight, he finds excuses. If he does not want to fight, he finds excuses. If he wants to make love, he finds reason thereof, if he wants to despise, he finds reasons thereof. He is forever finding excuses. He does what he wants first, then finds excuses. We all do this. If I say, "I do not like you" and I give my reasons also even then the dislike has already registered in my emotions first, then I find reasons.

You like a person. You say he is pleasant and nice therefore you like him; but Freud says you like him that is why you say he is pleasant and nice. The liking comes first, the reason follows. The moon is beautiful and therefore you like it – or is it that you like it and hence you find it beautiful? Say, you have become insolvent, you are weighed down with worries – the same moon will no longer appear beautiful. Then the moon looks sad and weary; it too appears bankrupt. Your feelings are projected on the moon. What you feel within, you project without.

But man is clever. He finds logical arguments for his blind feelings and says these are his interpretations. The moon is beautiful, hence we like it. Such and such a man is full of virtues, hence we respect him; but the truth is very much different. You revere a person first, then you start to find out the reason why; and when you revere him no longer and malign .him, then too you think you do so because you have found him lacking in virtue. This is wrong. The malevolence comes first in your mind, faults and shortcomings, you find later on.

Before Freud, the prevalent opinion was, that man used his intellect and power of reasoning in whatever he did. Since the last fifty years however. Psychoanalysts have come to the conclusion that man does not make use of his intellect in his dealings.

Bertrand Russell has mentioned an experiment in one of his looks. He got a soap factory to take the opinion of Britain's ten topmost scientists and advertise their comment on their produce. At the same time, he approached another soap factory which produced a low quality soap and stood nowhere near the other company's soap. He told them to get a third-rate film .actress to comment on their soap saying she used it for her beauty. The sale of this soap increased by leaps and bounds whereas the good quality soap recommended by the scientists, did not sell at all!

Man is a rational creature – very rational. Those ten topmost scientists' opinion did not mean anything to them; while an ordinary dancing-girl mattered a great deal. The scientists talk with the intellect whereas the filmstar appeals and stimulates that part of you which lies behind the intellect.

Now everybody has become wise to the fact that if you have any goods to sell, you place a girl before your wares and that does the trick. You can sell almost anything this way. All you have to do is to stand a half-clad woman beside it! All the comments of scientists and sages will hold no water against this ordinary dancing girl. The reason is plainly this that man is not a rational creature. He has deluded himself that he is. The mechanism that works within him works entirely on his emotions. This however, he is not willing to accept. He likes to believe – and does believe – that he is the most rational creation that has descended directly from God.

The shocks that mankind has suffered in the last 150 years has managed to destroy the castle of his ego.

Lao Tzu says: "There is no need to build a castle. He is a mad man who tells you to." Lao Tzu has not once mentioned God in his statements. This he does knowingly for he says as soon as you mention God, you try to identify your ego with Him. Lao Tzu does not mention God or the Ultimate, achieve – ment or beatitude. He says, "The ultimate achievement is, that you stand last in the row – that is beatitude."

No one is prepared to stand last. You can persuade a man to do anything as long as he is well in the forefront. Be that work as absurd and stupid as possible, if he is in the front, he will not require much persuasion. If however, you tell him that God is attained only by being last in the rank and file, he is not prepared to fall back. The lowliness within us cannot bear this. Only if there is supreme excellence within, does a man voluntarily step back and be the last.

It is an interesting fact that only those reach in the forefront, who stand behind. The ultimate height of beatitude is attained only by those who seek out valleys, may the deepest of abysses like water.

Keeping in mind the law of the opposites, Lao Tzu gives one message only: "He who becomes like the water, attains Tao."

The excellence of a dwelling depends on the propriety of the place – but not for us. These statements are not meant for us. Lao Tzu says: "THE EXCELLENCE OF A DWELLING PLACE, DEPENDS ON THE FITNESS OF THE PLACE." This does not apply to us for when we set out to buy a house we

do not consider its worth as a residence, we are more concerned as to how much its situation and workmanship helps to project our ego. This is why many a time, you are prepared to stay in an uncomfortable place if it is adjoining to the houses of the rich gentry. You will not be prepared to stay in a comfortable house if it is in a poor locality. We are not worried about the suitability or fitness of a house; all that concerns us is the gratification of the ego.

We put up with a lot of inconveniences just to fulfil the ego. If the ego is satisfied hv putting on a tie, we will put up with heat and perspiration. If respectability demands that we put o shoes we will put them on even if they hurt! In China women used to reduce the size of their feet by wearing iron shoes. Small feet were the mark of a genteel lady! This is why the feet became a sex-symbol in China, just as the breast have become a sex-symbol nowadays.

For 5,000 years no one paid any attention to the woman's breasts in China. The attention was all on her feet. A small foot and a man would become mad with passion! It is no longer so, for the concept has changed. This was a conditioning of the mind in China for 5,000 years. The pain and agony of a woman with big feet cannot be imagined. Now this was not because of the feet themselves. If, in fact, the feet are big, you can walk better, run better and you are much stronger. The body also can be properly balanced. But that was not the question. The suitability of the place did not depend on its fitness but rather in the fulfillment of the ego. A woman who could walk without support was not considered of a genteel family.

The same conditions prevail even today, only the symbol has changed. You are ready to undergo a thousand discomforts if it satisfies your ego. You can leave a thousand pleasures if it does not feed your ego. Man is ready to be a martyr and willing to bear any hardship in his journey towards ego-fulfillment. Our clothes, our houses, our ornaments, our cars, in none of these do we worry about their suitability or usefulness. We are not even concerned what we eat as long as it appears respectable and nourishes our ego.

When a guest comes to the house, you do not worry whether the meals served are well-balanced and conducive to health. This is why invariably the guest falls sick later on. The guest must fall sick or else your hospitality will not be extolled. It would then mean he was not looked after properly. Not only you, even the guest would think on these lines! The food served is not with an eye on good health but is connected directly with the ego of the host. He should be served with such delicacies which he has never heard of before!

Women load themselves with ornaments. If they are asked to carry a bag of the same weight, they will be aghast at your impertinence! Those women who consider themselves very delicate, even they do not mind going about with a kilo or two of gold on them. Gold can be carried but not iron of equal weight. On the ordinary scales, a kilo of gold is equivalent to a kilo of iron but not so on the scales of the ego! If iron has to be carried, the hands pain, but if gold has to be carried, you develop wing

What is the reason, what happens?

Women of Africa wear necklaces of bones round their necks. Their necks are loaded like the camel but they find no difficulty in going about. Normally, if a person is thus loaded, he would cry out that you are strangling him but if this is a criterion of beauty, it is accepted. Anything is accepted when it becomes a criterion of beauty.

The youth of America today are happy to live in all kind of filth for the Hippies have given a value to dirt and squalor. The Hippies say that all cleanliness is bourgeoise. The soap and the powder, the very act of bathing belongs to the class of the idle rich, the capitalists. These things are all false and belong to the false man, the real man does not worry about them. So dirt has acquired a new value today. Now if anyone wants to join the ranks of the Hippies, dirt is a sign of respectability, so he will have to remain filthy. The dirtier a person, the greater the Hippie. If a clean-shaven, clean-clothed person comes along they revile him and poke fun at him. They say, "Look, here comes the square!"

Hippies have started a new concept and many a young girl or boy, has accepted this new criterion. They are prepared to stay in dirt and squalor; if their bodies stink, they are more respectable hippies.

This has not happened for the first time in the world. We have always set our values. The Jain Sadhu does not bathe. So when a person goes to a Jain Sadhu and he does not stink of perspiration, the devotee becomes suspicious. He does not clean his mouth. When a Jain Sadhu talks his mouth must smell – that is the proof of his saintliness. If no foul smell comes from his mouth, the devotee is worried. Surely he makes use of dental cream! The fact is, nowadays he does.

Now the Jain Sadhu of today is in a great dilemma. ù His difficulty is, that he has a mark of respectability, 2,000 years old. He moves around in the world of today, he sees, he reads and he finds that even the toothpaste has its own value in the world of today. Now both these values hold good tor him. He is in a terrible state of contusion. So now he does both. He hides the toothpaste in his bundle and shows as if he does not use it. In the same manner, he bathes also. A Jain Sadhvi came to see me once. I asked her how it was that she was not smelling? She said, "I must tell you the truth. I cannot bear the smell of perspiration so I sponge myself everyday. Please do not tell anyone or else I shall lose my piety." The piety of a person is judged from her amount of abstinence from all rules of cleanliness!

The Jains had one set of value: that he who bathes is a materialistic person. His emphasis is on the body. To keep the body clean, to drape it with fineries, are the characteristics of a materialist. The spiritualist should not worry about the body at all. Some people went even a step further than the Jains. They were known as the Param Hansas. These people would relieve themselves and sit and eat right next to the excreta! If he did not, he was not looked upon as a Param Hansa. All those whose names are followed by this term Param Hansa, have been people of this type. Whatever thing we set our value on and make it a vehicle to satisfy our ego, man is forever prepared to accept and follow. How strange is man!

When you hear all this, you may be thinking that all this applies to other people. Do not be under that illusion! If you look at yourself and do a little introspection, you will find a hundred things you do in much the same way. If there is a certain fashion – say of dressing – which is against your nature and which makes you very uncomfortable, you will still follow it, if that is the current mark of respectability. A man wants to establish his superiority over the others in his neighbourhood. So he goes and buys a car which he can ill-afford. But buy he will, if only to be one over the others.

One day Nasruddin's wife told him: "Now there are only two ways out. Either buy a bigger car or change the locality – whichever in cheaper." Nasruddin replied, "It will be cheaper to buy a car. If we move to a new locality we shall have to start afresh. And who knows what all things the new neighbours might have?" Each one tries to go one over the other and no one is worried about what their actual needs are.

Lao Tzu says, "THE EXCELLENCE OF A DWELLING DEPENDS ON THE SUITABILITY OF THE PLACE." It is possible sometimes that a tree is more suitable than a royal palace or a single loin-cloth more befitting than costly clothes. People are very funny. They will bare themselves and lie in the sun if that is a mark of respectability. Then people will lie thus even if there is no need to do so! Fat women are always trying to lose weight and the thin ones are eager to put on weight.

In America, if a woman did not have black hair, she would do anything to turn them black. If her hair is black she will do anything to change the colour. The madness continues one way or the other. No one is bothered what is suitable. The only concern is – what is the trend? The trend however, changes every day.

There are many who set the trend these days and we do not even know about them. Ben Packard has written a book called "THE HIDDEN PERSUADERS". Their business it is to coax, to entice. There are hidden persuaders all around. A certain pattern of a cloth remains in vogue for about six months. Then the mills change the pattern for it wears off in the mind of customers. The cloth can remain the same but the pattern must change if the mills are to survive. Similarly with soap and other things. There are hidden persuaders. As soon as one brand of soap catches on in the market, these hidden persuaders start advertising a new brand and spread rumours that the old brand is now out of fashion. Now every one wants to keep pace with the latest trend, otherwise they feel lifeless. They must be right in the centre of fashions and this entails a lot of change on your part.

Now the biggest question in America is the disposal of old cars. They do not have space to stack the old cars. Every six months the models change. As far as the car itself goes, there is no need to change the model; but as far as the ego goes, it needs to be changed every month or better still, every day. However the production of cars is so much that the changing of models every year, is also not enough to sell them. So the hidden persuaders now go about spreading the word that one car is the sign of an ordinary man; a rich man must have two. So now the bigger man has two cars.

The bigger man has two houses. Even a poor man has one house. So now every man in America strives to have two houses; one for himself the other for his ego. He cannot possibly stay in both the houses, so one or the other invariably remains unoccupied. Yet he must have two if he is to be counted amongst those who matter.

I was the guest of a very rich man once. His house had 100 rooms. They were only the two of them: husband and wife. I asked them what they did with all these 100 rooms? "Nothing," said the husband. And that is their value. A poor man has to make the best use of his rooms, whereas a rich man can afford to keep them empty. "That is what it is. We keep them well cleaned, well decorated. What else can we do with them? After all, we are only two. We have no children, For us, one room is enough." Man can stay in one room but even 99 rooms are not enough for the ego. We are not concerned with the utility of the place.

"THE MIND'S EXCELLENCE IS IN ITS COMPLETE STILLNESS."

Lao Tzu says, "THE MIND'S EXCELLENCE IS IN ITS COMPLETE STILLNESS." But the excellence of our mind lies in its profound garrulousness. The more a man is stuffed with words and thoughts the more superior he appears to be. But Lao Tzu says: "In the deepest stillness, where the mind is completely void and silent, there alone lies its excellence." Why? Because where the mind becomes

empty, there alone do we encounter Truth. Where the mind becomes Void, there alone does tranquility spread. Where the mind is naught, there alone is the end of all pain. The more the mind works, the more is the pain and suffering. The longer the mind's journey, the greater is the destination of sorrow achieved.

Alas, we are such, we forever strive to know more, to think more, to ponder more and increase our wealth of words! If a man cannot express himself, who makes little use of words or thoughts, he is considered to be a rustic, an illiterate person. It is not necessary that a rustic, should be less intelligent than you. By and large, he is more intelligent. One thing is certain; he speaks less, he thinks less and therefore he appears primitive, for you can manipulate, you can play with words, whereas he cannot.

Only those people are successful in our culture, who can play with words. So we encourage our children to learn words to learn languages and literature. I do not say: do not learn literature. What I mean is, it is not the absolute excellence of the mind. If the mind gets anything out of it, it is the outside excellence. The inner excellence is never attained this way.

Those who have known the bliss within, have been up to now, those people, who have left the garbage of words outside of them and entered within.

"THE EXCELLENCE OF ASSOCIATION IS IN THEIR BEING WITH THE VIRTUOUS."

Have you ever pondered when you experience the excellence of association? If you stand next to the governor and your picture is taken, you feel you have been in excellent company. If you have your picture taken with a film star, you feel you have attained something. A well-known comedy actor Bob Hope had visited the army fighting on the battle-front, in order to entertain them. General Mac Arthur was also present. After the entertainment programme was over, he was very happy to have his photo taken with Gen. Mac Arthur. The General told him to send him a copy of the picture. Bob was puzzled – what did the general want with his photograph? He sent him one copy however. He also wrote to the general and expressed his wish to know why he had asked for this photograph.

Mac Arthur in his reply said: "When my son saw me standing next to you in the picture he said, 'Daddy this is your first picture with an excellent and well-known personality.'" To the son, Mac Arthur was of no value – as all fathers are to their sons. But Bob is a filmstar and his father is standing with a celebrated personality!

Just think for a moment; if you were given the opportunity to have your picture taken, with whom would you, like to be photographed? ninety-nine per cent it will be a film personality, ten per cent a political minister and a stray chance – perhaps with a saint, a pious person but this is very doubtful. You may refute this statement outwardly but it is very much so within.

A religious teacher, once handed out a questionnaire to the students. One of the questions was: Which is the greatest book in the world? Someone wrote, the book of Shakespeare, someone said the BIBLE, or the KORAN, or the ZEND AVASTA or GITA. Each one wrote the name of the book he liked. After collecting all the answers he asked; "Have you read the book you have mentioned? "We have not read them", they replied, "but these are great books. No one reads them. The books we read are quite different but you have not enquired about them." Actually the meaning of a great book

is this only that its name is well-known and nobody reads it. As long as it is read, it cannot be great. Then there is something wrong with it.

"The excellence of association lies in the company of saints," Says Lao Tzu. The greatest of excellence in this world is the excellence of association. To be in the company of a saint, is a golden-opportunity in the world. This however does not mean physical association. It is quite possible that you may be made to stand next to Buddha and yet there has been no association with the Saint; for this requires preparation on your part. What kind of preparation? The same preparedness like the down-flow of water! Then only can you attain the association of a saint. If you are prone to climb up, this cannot be. This is why the age-old custom that whenever a person approached the guru, he placed his head on his feet. Thus he conveys to the guru that he is prepared to be like water. This became an inevitable part of attaining the company of the saints – this placing of the head on the Guru's feet!

Everything gradually becomes a formality but this in no way reduces its value. But he who thus comes and places his head on the Master's feet, conveys by his body gesture, that he is ready to shake off everything, to destroy his ego, if he were to obtain his Master's grace!

Association – association with a sage – is an unequalled, unparalleled moment.

When Buddha was born, a great renunciate came from the Himalayas to Buddha's house. Buddha's father brought the new-born babe and placed it at the feet of the sage. This great renunciate was about 100 years old. Tears began to flow from his eyes. Buddha's father was frightened. He said, "You are a great Tapasvi. You are crying! What ill-omen do you see in the child? This is my moment of supreme happiness. Please be happy and bless the child! Or is it that you see some tragedy in his life?"

The old sage replied: "No, no! No evil can befall this child! The tragedy is for me. This child is born and destined to be a Buddha; but I shall then no longer be in this world. I cry that I will not have the golden opportunity to sit at his feet! For then I would have attained what I could not attain for infinite lives. But that is not to be. The moment of my death is drawing near and it will be full forty years when he reaches the state of the Buddha. When he blossoms into flower, I shall no longer be. That is why I cry."

Here is a man who cries that he will not be with Buddha forty years hence; but there were people also, who when they heard of Buddha's approach fled their town and ran away. There is the story of a girl called Gautami. As soon as she heard of Buddha's arrival, she would leave the town because she said many people were spoiled by association with him. Whoever was attracted by his talks, landed himself in difficulty. So many became sannyasins, so many became Bhikshus and so many closed their eyes and were drowned in meditation! People worry no longer about wealth or status. People go mad! This man is hypnotic, one should beware of him!

But one day she missed. Buddha suddenly reached a village and Gautami happened to pass him on the road. She did not know when suddenly she came upon him. She was of the same age as Buddha and belonged to the same place. Since years she was running away from him. She avoided his very shadow. But when one runs away so much, there is some pleasure in it; when one tries to escape so much, the fear is there. And she is well aware of the radiance and the brilliance of

his personality. Now when she suddenly came upon him, she stopped for a moment and said, "Are you same other Buddha? You are pulling me towards you!" Buddha replied, "I am the same Buddha whom you are trying to escape. Today we have met accidentally." She fell at his feet at once and was initiated into Sannyas. Buddha asked her, "But you were trying always to run away from me?" "Yes, " she replied, "But there was always a longing within, one love thought – to see you just once. Perhaps because of this thought I was running away from you. Perhaps I was afraid, perhaps I knew that one look and I shall be gone! And it has happened today – just by chance!"

There were people who ran away from Buddha. There were people who plugged their ears so that they may not hear the voice of Mahavira. There were people who were keen to kill Jesus so that his words may not reach the people. Such people were also there.

Lao Tzu says, "THE EXCELLENCE OF ASSOCIATION IS THE COMPANY OF THE VIRTUOUS." And who are the virtuous? Whom do we call virtuous? Have we any criterion to measure a saint or a sinner? No, there is only one measure. He in whose company you can relax completely, in whose company you feel bliss, peace and in whose presence you experience light, he is a saint.

Do not worry about what he eats or what he drinks; or what he wears and what he does not wear; or what he says or does not say. You do not also worry about what people say or do not say about him. You carry out the test yourself. But before you carry out the test, you will have to experiment on yourself. You shall have to be like water; and who becomes like water immediately comes to recognise a saint and the moment of association is attained. Then let the world say anything, it makes no difference.

IF THE EXCELLENCE OF ASSOCIATION IS IN THEIR BEING WITH THE VIRTUOUS, THE EXCELLENCE OF GOVERNMENT IS IN ITS SECURING GOOD ORDER. The good order Lao Tzu speaks about is very wonderful. Lao tzu says: "Good order is that where there is no need of order." Lao Tzu is a strange man! He says, "I call it order when no order is needed." If when the king arrives, his arrival has to be announced by the beat of drum so that people may stand respectfully, that is no order according to Lao Tzu. If however, people became silent when the king enters and the silence conveys that the king has arrived, then that is order. Lao Tzu says: "I call it order when no order is needed".

If the Guru has to proclaim: "I am the master, respect me," then it is as good as an insult. So Lao Tzu says, "Guru is he, whom you cannot but respect; and even you are not aware how you paid your respect. When you lift your head from his feet, then you realize that your head had bowed in obeisance. This is reverence according to Lao Tzu.

All Lao-Tzu's statements are contrary to the general understanding. He says where order is required there is no order. Where police is required to prevent theft, that is a society of thieves. Where prisons are required to prevent crimes, it is a congregation of criminals. Order is only where no prisons are required, where there are no policemen and where there are also no sadhus and sannyasins explaining to people; 'Do not steal, do not be dishonest, do not do this or that.' Lao Tzu says, "THE EXCELLENCE OF GOVERNMENT IS IN GOOD ORDER."

"THE EXCELLENCE OF THE CONDUCT OF AFFAIRS IS IN ITS ABILITY"; and by this he means exactly what Krishna says: "He alone is proficient in his actions, whose sense of 'the doer' is lost and

only the action remains." When the doer exists, it interferes in the proficiency of the act. You must have noticed whilst driving a car that at the moment when an accident takes place, the driver has stepped in, in the place of the act of driving. When there is only driving and no driver, no accidents take place – at least on your part. When the driver comes in between the act of driving, then there is trouble. By driver I mean you – when you start thinking about how expert a driver you are and so on. Where the doer exists, the proficiency of the act is lost. The excellence of the method of work lies in the skillfulness of the act – act without the sense of doer-ship.

Only then is an act performed without the sense of doer-ship when there is no expectation of reward. When a reward is expected, the doer is present. When no reward is expected, the act itself is enough – it is enough unto itself. This is why, when we do anything without an eye on the result, it turns out to be excellent. If you do gardening as a hobby, your skill at gardening will be superb. If you paint for pleasure, your concentration on painting will become meditation. If you play the sitar, not professionally, then it is your own delight. Then the proficiency you attain, is the excellence that Lao Tzu talks about. This is why so much pleasure is derived from a hobby than normal work. This is because in your everyday work the doer is present whereas in your hobby the doer is not required; there is no question of earning and the doing itself is a pleasure.

THE EXCELLENCE OF THE INITIATION OF ANY MOVEMENT LIES IN ITS TIMELINESS. Any movement or any thought or organisation or any religion succeeds only if the times are favourable. Any movement succeeds only if it satisfies the needs of the times. But there is a danger to it also because all movements are related to their particular times. Then what happens is, that time passes but the movement remains.

There are at present, 300 religions in the world; and all these 300 of them are not necessary for our times. One religion is enough for today. This however, is not possible for all the 300 religions were born in 300 different periods of time. Those periods are now long over, but the skeletons of the religions still remain. Those who cling to them, refuse to let them go for they say they were created by their ancestors. They were successful in their times, only because they were suitable for their time and today this is the very reason for their failure; for all these religions are no longer suitable to our age.

Whatever Buddha said was of use 2,500 years ago. If a person merely keeps repeating his words in the modern age, he knows nothing of the logic of life. What Mahavira has said is also of a language 2,500 years ago. It was fruitful because it was the right language of that Age.

Lao Tzu himself was a failure in his times. His movement could gain no ground because he spoke in the language of timelessness. He could not succeed because he spoke the language of Eternity. Whenever a person speaks in the language of Eternity, his movement does not succeed. For any movement to succeed, the language spoken should be the language of the prevailing time, which can be easily understood. Lao Tzu was aware of this fact but it was beyond him to give rise to any movement; What he spoke pertained to Eternity.

Therefore, a curious fact comes to light: All the successful movements ultimately become a noose round the neck! People like Lao Tzu are never so but then, they give rise to no movement also! People like Lao Tzu never lead the people astray for they do not also speak the proper language to lead them to the right path. Buddha, Mahavira, Krishna, Christ and Mohammed were successful because they spoke the language of their times; but then this very thing became the bondage.

Now what is needed is that someone should scatter the language of their times and unfold and bring out the timeless essence that lies hidden underneath. This however, the followers find difficult to do. They say you must repeat the full prayer as it is and make no changes here or there.

Aurangzeb hanged a man just on this slight issue. There was a man by the name of Sharmad. He did not repeat the full prayer that Muslims repeat continuously. The prayer is "There, is no God except One." Sharmad repeated only the first half of the prayer. He would say "There is no God."

The priests were distressed by this. They went and complained to Aurangzeb. Sharmad was called before the emperor and ordered to explain himself. He said he did not say the prayers wrong, what words were, he repeated. He admitted he repeated only half the prayer. When it was pointed out that half the prayer changed the meaning completely, he still insisted on saying only half the prayer. He said, "As yet, I know only the first half, the other half I have yet to experience. The day I experience the other half of the prayer, I shall include it in my prayers. As long as I have no knowledge of the existence of God, I shall not repeat the second half of the prayer."

Verily this man was branded an Atheist; what could be more atheistic than this? He was beheaded. This sweet story is a historical fact. There were thousands who witnessed the beheading of Sharmad. When before the Masjid in Delhi, Sharmad's head rolled down the steps of the Masjid, it is said that a voice arose from his streaming blood repeating the prayer in full: "There is no God, except One." Those who loved and revered Sharmad say that that One and only God is known only when a person gets beheaded. But if we go by the language of the Koran only, Sharmad appears to be an atheist but the fact is, Sharmad alone is a Theist.

The pain and remorse that gnawed at the heart of Aurangzeb till his dying day was the pain of having beheaded Sharmad. In his last moments he said, "I am not worried about any other sins I committed, for they all could not equal the one sin I committed of having Sharmad killed. If this sin is forgiven me, all other sins will naturally be nullified. If this is not forgiven, there is no hope for me."

Naturally – all movements, all languages all manifestations. succeed if they befit the times of their Age but this has also been the very cause of their failure. Therefore, the wise and the intelligent, shake off the ashes of the old from time to time and unfold and clear the transcendental perpetually. So much wisdom alas! the followers never possess or else they never would have been followers. When so much wisdom dawns on mankind we shall never lose all the matter that is precious and also all the priceless truths.

One last thing:

A saint is revered and respected only as long as he raises no useless controversy about his low position. This is the last condition Lao Tzu has added. It is quite possible that you may take on the low position and then go about telling others: "See, the sinners are in the forefront while the virtuous are pushed behind. The wicked are victorious and the simple are defeated. The dishonest are mentioned in papers whereas the wise go unheeded." There are people all around who wail thus. They always complain: "What is this justice in the world of God that the thief is successful and the good man is not?"

Lao Tzu says: "If ever you wrangle about your position, know that you are not an excellent person." All the reverence and respect given to you, will end. Your greatness lies in the fact that you accept

with grace and gratitude whatever comes to you. If you gain no success in the backward ranks, that itself is your success. If you are given dishonour, that alone is your honour. If you receive insults, that alone is your respect. When abuse rains on you, that alone is the raining of flowers on you. Whatever happens, do not wrangle, raise no unnecessary controversy. A single word in this direction and all is lost. A single complaint, however small, destroys all excellence.

In fact, a superior person never complains – never ever. He has no complaints for he is grateful to God for whatever he receives.

Enough for today, we shall continue tomorrow.

CHAPTER 22

Lao-tse is the most useful in the present state of the world

8 November 1971 pm in Immortal Study Circle

Question 1

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE FORE-SIGHT AND WHAT ARE THE HOPES THAT HAVE INSTIGATED YOU TO RESURRECT THE 2,500 YEAR OLD RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS OF LAO TZU?

Bhagwan Sri: Whatever Lao Tzu has said is 2,500 years old. But in a way, it is as fresh as the morning dew. It is new because it has never been put into practice. It is new because the spirit of man has not taken a single step in its direction. The road is absolutely untouched, virgin. It is old because of the fact that Lao Tzu gave news of this path, 2,500 years ago. It is new because his news was not heeded up to now. Today as never before, it has become an urgent necessity to take heed of his message.

Man has made use of the masculine-mind and seen the results. Our history of the last 2,000 years, is the history of the experiment of the masculine mind. In 2,500 years, we have made use of logic, struggle, violence, aggression and conquering ambitions. Man became more and more miserable day by day. Whatever we desired to attain, we did not attain. Whatever we had, we lost. This was the result of this experiment. We were unsuccessful.

When Lao Tzu spoke, the masculine-consciousness had not attained such a failure. Therefore Lao Tzu was not heeded. It would be better to say that Lao Tzu was born 2,500 years be-fore his time. This was his mistake. He should have been born today. Today he would have been heeded. It was as if the illness was not born and the healer came first. Then if he talks of the medicine, no one bothers to hear him, for the illness was not there, the cure of which he was suggesting.

Now the illness has been born within these 2,500 years, and its cure is Lao Tzu alone. The experiment With the masculine-mind has failed. It has led us virtually to the door of total war. There seems to be no way ahead. Either the human race will come to an end or man will have to walk on a different path. Therefore it is useful to rediscover Lao Tzu. Lao Tzu can be elected to lead the world today – he has to be. If man wants to save himself, the qualities of the Female-Consciousness will have to be established or else there is no hope of survival of the human race.

Man has failed to create a world on the basis of the masculine consciousness; but deeper than the male, is the element of female. We could not create life by neglecting this female element. We have turned the world into a big madhouse. We could not make the world into one family. If the woman is not the centre, a house becomes a lunatic asylum. A woman at the centre is useful to absorb a thousand types of tensions. If woman is at the centre of our culture, she would be capable of dissolving a thousand kinds of tension. We shall have to make the Female-Consciousness the foundation of our culture. The time has now come when we shall have to make a decision within the next thirty to forty years. Therefore I thought it proper to speak on Lao Tzu.

Verily, Lao Tzu appears contrary today. Man is very complex and Lao Tzu talks of simplicity. Man is very arrogant and egoistic and Lao Tzu talks of humility. Man is eager to scale all heights, reach the moon and the stars and Lao Tzu talks of the rule of descending into valleys and abysses. Man wants to be first and Lao Tzu says there is no way of attaining the bliss of existence except by being the very last! So it would seem that in such a contrary Age, who is going to listen to Lao Tzu?

But let me tell you, when you reach one extreme, we are ready to change to the other. We have reached the end of complexity, now there is nothing beyond this, and now the opposite can come within our understanding. If a man has toiled all day and is exhausted, then only can he understand the meaning of sleep. Sleep is the opposite of labour but if a person is not tired then what happens? And this is what happens usually. Those who have the wherewithal do not need to toil in the day. then they complain they cannot sleep at night. They however think they are entitled to more rest but they are wrong for relaxation comes only to him who has toiled sufficiently.

Heavy labour alone becomes the means to deep relaxation and this in turn recreates the energy to engage in work again.

Existence is like the stream that flows between the banks of the two opposites.

We have lived long enough on the bank of the masculine-consciousness. The time has now come for us to cross over to the opposite bank of female consciousness. By doing so, we can strike a balance and create the right conditions. The time is ripe for change. Therefore I do not think on the lines, that we being intricately complex, how will we understand Lao Tzu? Rather, I feel we have reached the peak of complexity. So much, so that anything beyond this point will be beyond our understanding. Now we have reached a stage where we can only understand the language of relaxation. Man actually has reached the point where the male consciousness has manifested itself in its fullness. It has reached its maximum from where there is nothing further ahead. It has reached the point of saturation. When the tension is complete the point of relaxation is reached. If a man keeps running and running and running, he finally falls and stops. Have you ever thought what is the final destination of a race? It is nothing else than a fall. It ends in the opposite.

Lao Tzu can now be worked upon. In his own time the world could not understand him for the people of these times, were not so intricately complex for Lao Tzu to be their Physician. People were not so distressed and confounded as to understand him. People had not as yet been initiated into the world of competition. No one was hankering for the front position so as to understand the sutra of being the last. Now however, we stand in the front. In Lao Tzu's time people did not have such abundance of wealth so as to understand the joy of being penniless. Now so much of wealth has collected in the world that poverty can now seem a freedom.

One incident in the life of Confucius comes to my mind. He was passing through a village when he saw a man and his son, harnessed to the water-wheel, drawing water from the well. Confucius was shocked. He went up to the old man and said, "Do you not know that now people use horses or bullocks to draw water from the well? In the capital there are also machines that do this work." The old man said, "Please speak softly lest my son hears you. Come after some time." Confucius was more perplexed now but be returned after some time, for he was curious to know. The old man was lying under a tree. "I am well aware of the fact that horses and bullocks are used now a days to draw water from the well," he told Confucius. "I also know I can save my son's time and energy by using a horse but what shall I do with the unused energy of my son? I have no other use for it. Please let your horses and machines remain in your towns. Do not bring them here."

But this news of machines could not be stopped from spreading. By and by it spread all over the country and man was replaced by machines. The old man was a follower of Lao Tzu. But it was Confucius who won this time. Now, however, it is Lao Tzu's turn to win, for wherever the machines have taken over completely, this question arises afresh. What is Man to do with the time on his hands? What is he to do with the unused energy? That time and energy that is not made use of constructively, is bound to be misused for energy has got to be made of. As Paul Sartre says: "You can choose but you cannot choose not choosing." Energy will have to be used constructively or destructively.

For 2,500 years, Lao Tzu's statement lay buried like seeds, waiting for the right moment to sprout. The right moment is now at hand. Now we understand what he means when he says – that constructive methods for utilisation of man's energies, should first be evolved before introducing mechanisation. His atman should attain such heights and become so vast that he can be trusted with an atom bomb. Otherwise, the atom bomb in the hands of a small man, is bound to be dangerous. Power is dangerous in the hands of ignorant people. It is better if an ignorant person remains powerless for then he can cause no harm by misusing his strength.

Lao Tzu can now be understood for now we have tread the whole long way and seen for ourselves that Lao Tzu was right when he said that this way ultimately ends only in sickness and sorrow. Therefore, I have selected to speak on Lao Tzu's 2,500 year old teachings, which are absolutely virgin, so to say, for they have never been worked upon. This I do with the hope that perhaps man will now be willing to hear him. I say 'perhaps', because I know that many a time we are ready to die rather than change ourselves. Death seems easier than a change. Therefore I say perhaps man may be willing to try out Lao Tzu. I am not absolutely sure; for we may readily accept death as that can be taken as martyrdom, whereas bringing about a change within ourselves, is a blow to the ego. We hardly take a step forward, when the fear of what others might say grips us.

Mulla Nasruddin set out one night from his house. He was drunk – dead drunk. The night was dark, the road was deserted. There was no one to bear witness to his drunkenness except an electric

pole. He looked at it and said to himself "I must take care not to knock against this pole." But that is exactly what happened. When a man tries to save himself from something, he lands himself straight into it, for his whole attention is directed towards the very thing he tries to avoid. He kept looking at the pole in order not to miss it and his legs invariably moved in the same direction as his eyes. He dashed against the pole and fell. He got up and took a few steps backwards, his eyes still fixed on the pole. It is quite possible, he was not very attentive for it in simple logic to concentrate fully on the object that is to be avoided. Now his whole attention was focused on the pole. The road vanished completely from his sight. He went straight towards it and dashed again.

He got up once more, his head reeling with pain. He was at a loss – tears came to his eyes. But he did not give up. He tried once again. Now the road was broad, he could have crossed it from another side but he did not. He again went in the same direction. This time his head knocked against the pole, so that he suddenly saw a number of poles whirling before his eyes. He was terrified. Now he invoked Allah and made a last bid to cross the road but alas, once again he dashed into the pole!

When he fell for the fourth time he called out, "Oh God, there is no way to get out of this place! It looks as if I am surrounded on all sides by electric-poles! Wherever I go, there is an electric-pole!" Actually, he was going nowhere. He was going in one direction and to the same place again and again. There was only one pole and even a blind man could have passed without knocking against it but this man with two eyes, who was however not in his senses, could not make it.

We all are people with eyes – but unconscious! Lao Tzu calls our worst narcosis – the ego. Lao Tzu says, "Ego is our stupor for it prevents us from being realistic towards this world." It implants its own projections over everything and prevents us from seeing the world as it is. We all see the world as our ego shows us, we all think what our ego forces us to think and we never try to know facts as they are. Only he is capable of knowing Reality, whose projector of the ego is completely gone.

Question 2

ONE FRIEND HAS ASKED, "EGO IS ALSO CREATED BY NATURE THEN WHY SHOULD IT BE REMOVED?"

Lao Tzu does not tell us to remove the ego, nor does he deny the fact that it is given to us by nature. All illnesses also, are born out of nature. Whatever is in creation, is born out of nature. Lao Tzu only says this: that if you cling to the malady that is ego, you will suffer. If you want to suffer then go ahead and cling to it!

But man is strange! He clings to the ego and craves for bliss! Then, Lao Tzu says, you are doing wrong. If a man wants to die, he can take poison. Poison also is created by nature; but if the man is willing to take poison because it is nature's creation and is yet unwilling to die, then it is difficult. Lao Tzu says that if you want to die, take the poison and die. If you do not want to die, then do not take the poison. The happening of death is natural, the taking of poison is also natural but the decision is in your hands – to die or not to die.

Ego is a natural phenomenon. If a man wants to undergo the suffering, the hell thereof, he is free to do so. If he does not want to, he may not. It is in the hands of a man whether to allow or not to allow the seed of the ego to become a tree. Lao Tzu does not talk of removing the ego. He

says if you do not want to suffer, you will have to stand apart from the ego. If you wish to undergo suffering, you may increase your ego. We however, are contradictory. We desire that which is never attained through the ego and at the same time we do not want to lose the ego. In this uncertainty and suspense our lives are filled with misery.

Question 3

ANOTHER
FRIEND HAS ASKED THAT: SAINTS HAVE ALWAYS TALKED ABOUT TRANSCENDENCE, OF GOING UPWARDS, WHEREAS LAO TZU TALKS OF GOING DOWNWARDS – WHY?

Lao Tzu talks of going downwards for no one can go upwards without having gone downwards. Those who have talked of going upwards have talked of the goal and not of the means. When Lao Tzu talks of going downwards, he talks of the method, the means. If you want to go upwards, you will have to go downwards. This seems contradictory. Nietzsche has said that the tree that wishes to go high up in the skies, must send its roots deeper down in the soil below. If the tree wished to grow higher without going deeper into the soil, that cannot be; for without going further down, there is no way to go up.

Says Lao Tzu, "if you wish to go up you shall have to make arrangements to go down." Forget all about going up, leave it to nature. You let your roots go deep within the soil and nature will make your flowers bloom high up in the sky. You have not to worry about it at all, for the slightest worry weakens the roots. Concentrate all your efforts on the roots and the flowers will bloom of themselves. Where there ae roots there are bound to be flowers. The stronger the roots the bigger and more fragrant are the flowers.

Lao Tzu says, "Find the lowest place, as the water finds; and your peaks will come to you by themselves." Become the lake and you will find yourself transformed into Mt. Gourishankar. You give up all endeavour to become Gourishankar for the rule according to Lao Tzu is: He who wishes to go up, is sent down, but he who is willing to go down finds no competitors to wrestle for his heights. Please understand his formula.

The trouble is, that some rules are contrary and they evade our understanding for we believe in straight logic. That is the male mind. We do not know that life does not believe in straight logic. It believes in the inverse logic. We believe in straight logic – just as a man who walks on a highway – straight road!

In life however, there are no highways. Life's ways are like the mountain paths. All its paths are covered with mist and cloud One moment I feel, if I go straight on one path, I shall reach the moon that I see right in front of me but very soon I find I have lost my way, the moon is now behind me! Life's ways are circular, never straight. Nothing is straight but we believe in a straight way.

For example: now if someone tells you, he goes for a walk each morning and it gives him joy so you also set out the next morning in search of this joy. Then you will only come back tired and vexed. The reason is, your mind will always be on the look-out for that joy, that pleasure and it will never be in the act of walking, which then becomes a laboured task. You are out to seek joy and as soon as it is achieved you have done with walking and you will want to go back home. You have been

constrained to walk. If the joy was available sitting at home, you would never have walked. You walked just because someone said it was blissful to walk, You will come back and say that man was a liar. There is no pleasure in walking for you walked four miles and there was no sign of joy anywhere! But he who said this did not say wrong.

Walking is a pleasure but only for him whose mind is on walking and not on pleasure. When all the attention is on walking the joy thereof is a by-product. When a person is so lost in walking that the walker fades and only the act of walking remains then the flower of bliss blooms.

Life is misty. If you feel that you will achieve happiness by loving someone, you will never be happy. Although there is joy in loving but this joy is for him only who drowns himself in love and does not worry about the bliss. He who desires bliss from love, does love but his attention is all on the bliss thereof. Then he finds himself holding the beloved's hand but does not find bliss in it. He will never find it also. And yet those who say there is bliss in love are absolutely correct. Actually love and bliss are not correlated. There is no causal link between them. It is not as if you heat water and it turns to vapour.

The deeper you go into existence, the lesser the causality becomes; and the more spontaneous and natural are the results attained. All that is deep and profound in life is the outcome of natural and spontaneous results.

You go to hear music. You sit upright, with full concentration determined to enjoy the music to the fullest – you never will. You will only tire yourself. Relax, close your eyes, forget all about enjoyment, just drown yourself in the music. If you thus get enrapt in the melody, you will be filled with bliss. The flower of bliss does not blossom in tension but in complete relaxation, those who become concerned about the attainment, can never relax.

Therefore Lao Tzu says: "You do not worry about the top, you become like water. Come down to the lowest abyss." The heights are invariably attained and so he does not talk about them at all. That is the natural outcome and does not need to be discussed. Yet, we are contrary people. We will listen to Lao Tzu only because he assures us of reaching up if we go down. So we set out confident that this is pure mathematics. We first make quite sure that if we go down, we shall rise up but then we go down but never rise up for that is not in the hands of anyone. It does not rest in the hands of the sadhaka. There is no guarantee and where a person starts with this guarantee, the happening never takes place. It is necessary to understand this inverse logic of life.

People come to me and say: "I desire peace." I tell them, "Forget all about peace and begin to meditate." But then they ask, "If I meditate, will I get peace?" I tell them again to concentrate on meditation and forget about peace but they keep on asking. Then I tell them, "You have tried all these years to attain peace. You have been after peace for so long and yet it has eluded you. Now you forget about peace and just meditate." But again they ask, "By forgetting all about tranquility, will it be attained?" So the matter ends where it was.

It is said that when Mulla Nasruddin was 100 years old he suddenly became so very contented, so very blissful that people were astonished; for it was difficult to come across a man more discontented than the Mulla. He used to complain about almost everything. They all gathered round him and asked, "Mulla, this is a miracle! You of all people have become so serene! We could never have imagined. What is the secret?"

Nasruddin replied, "Ninety-nine years I spent striving for peace. This year I have decided to live with my restlessness. I have decided to give up all thought of tranquility. I tried for ninety-nine years and I failed. Now I have abandoned the idea and I find I have become peaceful!"

He who is prepared to live with non-tranquility, finds nothing wanting in his tranquility. He who is willing to suffer, who can snatch the happiness of such a one? And he who volunteers to descend to the lowermost abyss, no one has the power to snatch the heights he reaches. He who is prepared to be nothing finds himself to be everything, and he who is ready to annihilate himself, finds that all the wealth of the divine is his. Lao Tzu talks of this sutra. That does not mean he tells you to go downwards. He says there is only one way to ascend and that is you be ready and willing to be the last.

Question 4

ONE FRIEND SAYS, "LAO TZU HAS TALKED OF THE PROFUNDITY OF THE FEMALE-CONSCIOUSNESS BUT NO TIRTHANKAR, OR AVATAR OR PAIGAMBARA (PROPHET) OR A JESUS OR A BUDDHA OR A MAHAVIRA OR A KRISHNA IS BORN OUT OF A FEMALE-CONSCIOUSNESS. IF THE FEMALE-CONSCIOUSNESS IS SO SUPERLATIVE, ALL RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD SHOULD HAVE BEEN THEREOF. ALL RELIGIONS HAVE HOWEVER ORIGINATED FROM MAN. WHY?"

This definitely requires to be understood.

There is a reason to this. Everything that is born in this world, is a result of the male and female relationship. In the birth of a child, the role of the male is accidental. His contribution is momentary, but he is the initiator. The birth of the child begins through him.

All things in this world are born this way. You will be surprised to know that even though Mahavira, Jesus and Buddha give rise to a religion, it was because of the women it was absorbed by the people. It is the women who first absorb it, develop it and spread it. This could never have occurred to you. Go to a temple, a mosque, a church, whom do you find there? Man is missing. If he is there it is only out of fear of his wife. All churches and temples run on women. Man gives rise to a religion but it is women who look after it, protect it and help it to develop.

Psychologists say, "No religion can last on earth if women are not initiated into it." No religion can survive, if it finds no womb to nurture it.

Do you know that for every man initiated by Mahavira. he initiated four women? There were 13,000 Bhikshus and Sannyasins whereas there were 40,000 Sannyasinis. Jesus was crucified by men but the one who brought him down from the cross was a woman – and she was a prostitute! When all his male disciples ran away, there were three women who stood by his dead body. He breathed his last before these three women. All his male-disciples forsook him, but these women never left his side. They also faced the danger of death but they stood by him till the very last. The birth is given by man – what is biological is also psychological – but all religions are nurtured in the womb of women. If you understand this, you shall not complain.

Even today if religion exists on this earth, it is entirely due to women and not because of men. It is the women who keep religion alive.

The initiation of all creation, is the male, but he cannot provide a womb. And by merely initiating, no life is born; it is only when a life finds the protection of the womb, that it is born. The hormones, the blood and all the rest comes from the woman's body. This does not occur to us. Protection, development, security are all part of the Female-Consciousness. The initiation, the commencement, is part of male-consciousness but man is bored soon after and he starts on something else. If Mahavira is reborn, one thing is certain: he will never talk of the Jain religion again. He will give birth to some other religion. Man is always eager to give birth to something new. Woman is always eager to conserve and protect the old. In a way, nature balances and stabilizes creation through these two. It is not enough just to give birth to something. It also needs to be protected, to be nurtured in order to grow or else there will be no sense in giving birth to anything.

Therefore, if a man has really a masculine-mind, he is always Progressive. If a woman has the correct Female-Mind, she is traditional.

To be traditional means only this – to take care of that which is born and progressiveness means to give birth to that which is yet unborn. Now what is the use of giving birth if there is no one to love and care afterwards? Then there can only be abortion. Left to man, there would be no births for as soon as the process of birth starts, he loses all interest and seeks fresh interests. The actual beginning of life is taken care of by the woman. The male-mind and the female-mind are the two wheels of a cart. Therefore woman gave birth to no religion but they are the ones who have absorbed and spread them.

One friend asks: "Do all wise men develop the Female-Consciousness?"

Definitely. This does not mean they become effeminate$_T heir minds, instead of being aggressive, become receptive. When this receptivity is born within a$

Question 5

OUR FRIEND HAS FURTHER ASKED, "THEN HOW IS IT THAT MOHAMMED EVEN AFTER ATTAINING REALISATION WENT OUT WITH SWORD IN HAND?"

Verily he went. But do you know what was engraved on his sword? "This sword shall never rise except in the cause of peace." Do you know the meaning of the word Islam? It means peace. If Mohammed had to raise the sword, it was not because of himself but because of the conditions around him. Even when his sword is lifted against someone, it is not out of wrath or aggression or violence but out of sheer compassion.

Mohammed has been understood very little. He is one of those few men who have been badly treated in this world. His sword has a lot to do with this misconduct of the world. But I say the sword in Mohammed's hand did the same work as a knife in the hands of a surgeon.

It is also very necessary at times that such a person has to lift the sword but this is beyond our imagination; and there is no need also to indulge in this imagination for the heart of Mohammed was tender than the tenderest of hearts. The conditions around this tender heart were such, that if this heart has to do something, it needs must take up the sword.

This however had a bad effect, not because of Mohammed but because of those who followed him. Their pleasure and interest was only in wielding the sword. They created turmoil and confusion and earned a bad name for Mohammed. They even distorted and maimed Islam. Mohammed wields the sword for it was necessary.

Krishna offers his help in battle and instigates a battle for it was necessary. Actually we have to understand the matter of choice in this world. We break everything into two – black and white. There is nothing black or white in actuality. Everything is grey and there are degrees of this colour – some things are a bit more dark, a bit less dark and something a bit more light or a bit less light. Whenever we pass judgment that this is right or this is wrong, we forget that we are not talking with regard to life. Mohammed picks up the sword because if he does not, it would have been worse. Understand this well. It was the lesser evil that Mohammed should take up the sword for swords were bound to clash and if he did not set out to fight out his cause on the battle-front, the greater evil would have its day. The conditions around him, constrained Mohammed to fight.

Krishna exhorts Arjuna to fight not that Krishna was eager for battle. No one could be of a greater female-consciousness than Krishna. This is why his pictures are so effeminate. No one, neither Buddha nor Jesus nor Mahavira has been depicted in this manner. His clothes, his ornaments, his hair, his dancing and singing and this man with such an effeminate mind, exhorts Arjuna, the great warrior, to fight! Arjuna was about to run away from the battle-field. Then where was the need for Krishna to urge him to fight?

Krishna could see clearly that the evil that was to be, was bound to be and it would be enacted by very many evil hands. Arjuna was the best of the lot so it was better that this evil was finished off by his hands. The war was bound to be for many of them were thirsty for each other's blood.

Sometimes I wonder whether Gita would ever have come into being if Krishna had been on Bhima's chariot! Bhima would have been so eager to battle that he would have urged him to drive faster into the enemy lines. It is also quite possible that Krishna might have denounced the battle. Arjuna is the one who understands his duty. He has proved his goodness by offering to step out of battle. Krishna was certain that a sword in the hand of such a one could never do evil. In fact, the truth is, that a sword can only be trusted in the hands of a good man. Generally however, it is the evil man who has the sword. The good man throws down the sword and the bad man picks it up. Thus inadvertently, the good man becomes the cause of all the evil in the world.

When we have to choose, then the option is not between something good and something bad. It is rather between less bad and more bad. All choice in life is thus. The choice is not between nectar and poison, it is between less poison and more poison. We have to choose the lesser poison; that is the choice of nectar. Mohammed and Krishna choose the lesser evil. Their situations are different.

Just think: If Krishna had died before Mahabharata it could never have occurred in our wildest imagination that he would instigate a war! If Buddha had lived another twenty years and if a situation akin to Mahabharata had developed, we cannot imagine Buddha ever giving his assent! Our perspective is limited. We see only that which has happened. We cannot see what would have been. Had Krishna died before, the Mahabharata, we could never have imagined that this man who played the flute, who frolicked with the Gopis, who was so filled with tenderness and love, could give a message for war thus! To my mind, there is no other religious book in the world that gives a greater impetus for war than the Gita.

But the male-mind is not the reason here. The mind that gives the call to battle is a completely female-receptive-mind. But the situation in which this receptive mind that is completely filled with God, finds itself, directs him to plunge whole-heartedly in the act of war. Whatever his God-satiated mind directs, Krishna carries out whole-heartedly as the call of the Divine.

The sword that is raised in Mohammed's hand, is the sword that is raised in the cause of the Divine. Mohammed is not at all aggressive. This does not however mean that he did not gather aggressive people around him; but for that the responsibility was not Mohammed's nor for that matter, anybody else's.

It is difficult to find a more fearless person than Mahavira but nobody could imagine that those who gathered round him would be the weakest and most cowardly of people! But it happened so for they found a shield in him. Life is very strange. Mahavira talked of non-violence and he also said that non-violence can result only in a mind that is freed from fear. But the fearful man thought this religion of non-violence was suitable for him. In this religion there were no fights – We shall kill no one and no one will kill us. To this fearful man, non-violence seemed the supreme religion. This was not because he believed non-violence to be the highest of religions but because he thought if all the world accepted non-violence, he would be able to live without fear. So all the weak and cowardly people collected behind Mahavira.

So it is not accidental that those who followed Mahavira were a class of impotent people, who have constricted themselves from all sides in life, who have just been mere baniyas (shop-keepers) all these 2,500 years. What is the reason?

These people found great safety in this business. This was the only business that entailed no strife, no quarrel. He creates nothing, goes no where. He does the work of a go-between. He keeps himself in the middle. Nobody could have dreamt that such spineless people could gather round such a fearless personality like Mahavira – who are capable of being just shop-keepers. Can any inner-potential awaken in this work of shop-keeping? But this seemed comfortable work for a fearful man. Strange – such people should be the followers of Mahavira!

Mohammed was incredibly compassionate and it was entirely out of compassion that he picked up the sword. If his compassion was even a little less, he would never had lifted the sword. But barbaric, blood-thirsty people, when they saw his raised sword, gathered round him. They were happy to see this meeting of sword and religion! Now no one could accuse them of killing. Now they would kill in the name of religion. So all the mid-Asian barbarian sects of the Tartars, the Huns and the Turks embraced Islam. The reason was only this that the sword was for the first time lifted out of its condemned place and elevated to the level of a temple. They all stood behind the sword and they trampled the whole world beneath their feet.

The influence of Islam today in the world is not on account of Mohammed. The number of Mohammedans is not on account of Mohammed but on account of the barbarians after him. They trampled the whole world but they destroyed Islam along with it. The religion that was started in the name of peace became a religion of non-peace and violence. But Mohammed cannot be held responsible for this. What could Mohammed do? What could Mahavira do? Mahavira could never have thought that a line of cowards will form behind him!

The logic of life is very strange. You can never say anything about it. There is one more rule of logic, which will help you to understand Lao Tzu, and that is: You are always attracted and influenced by the opposite. As it happens in sex, so it happens in everything else. You are always attracted towards someone who is just the opposite of you. This is a very dangerous thing but this is what happens.

Mahavira, is braver than the bravest. Therefore he was given the name, 'Mahavira'. His actual name was Vardhman. His courage had no equal – this is a fact. That the most cowardly of people would become his followers, is something that cannot be imagined! But so it is – always. Only the cowards are attracted by courage. The brave are never attracted by courage; and why should they be? If he is brave, so what? But the coward will find the fulfillment of his dreams. He would like to be as brave but he cannot be. He has found his ideal. Now at least he can touch his feet! He can praise him, hail him!

This then becomes their ideal for within them hides the man who is absolutely the opposite. Now such people gather and they create difficulties. It always happens so. We are attracted by the opposite. The reason why we are attracted is just the opposite of what we are. Later on these influenced people form organisations and sects. Then they will change all the text of the Master's statements and re-interpret them according to what suits them. Then everything becomes different – very different.

If we keep in mind this trend of history we may perhaps be able to warn Man to be careful where he steps. The psychologists today say that when a man is attracted towards a woman, he is attracted by those qualities in her which he does not possess. The woman is also attracted by the same reason. We are influenced by that which we do not have and never by what we have; for that we have already. The greater the contrast of qualities, the greater the attraction; the greater the romance. After marriage however, these very contradicting and opposite qualities are the basis of all dissensions. This is the difficulty.

Therefore psychologists say that the greater the love before marriage, the greater the calamity it leads to afterwards, Love means the attraction of the opposites. The hardest of men is attracted to the most delicate of women; but when these two stay together, they have nothing in common. Then the trouble starts. A very intellectual man can never be attracted towards an intellectual woman. He will find a woman who has not a trace of intelligence. But then the difficulty starts; for when they are together there is no communication between the two!

Now nobody can be blamed for this. All the trouble is because of the rule of the opposites in life. We are attracted by the opposite but we cannot live with the opposite. So our ultimate trouble is: We cannot live with the one to whom we are attracted and we are never influenced or attracted by one with whom we live. Therefore people of olden times were very clever. They said. "Marry one, love another." Do not try to do both these together. Marry a person with whom you can live and love the one to whom you are attracted.

Now the thinkers of America feel that if America is to be saved, this ancient cunning will have to be resorted to again. The Americans believed that one should marry the person we love. This is a wonderful thing but it cannot be, for love always happens between opposites and you cannot live with the opposite. Then the very qualities that attracted, become the cause of dissension and you find it impossible to adjust yourself.

As it happens between husband and wife, so it happens between the Guru and the disciple. This also is a great romance! People come attracted by the opposite, then find it difficult to stay. Therefore it is very difficult to live with a live Guru. A dead Guru poses no problems for in his non-presence you can do what you like.

Now Jesus has said "If a person strikes you on one cheek, offer him the other," but the number of people that have been killed in the name of Christianity is unthinkable! What is the reason? How could such people gather round a person like Jesus? Wicked people gathered round him, who killed people in order to teach them that if a person strikes you on your right cheek, offer him the left. They killed thousands of people with the excuse of spreading the message of Jesus.

Such contradictions take place. So Mohammed or Krishna are not aggressive. As soon as the Ocean of Perception opens before one like Mohammed or Krishna, the door to the Female-Consciousness opens within them. The meaning of Female-Consciousness is only this that in that moment a person is not aggressive towards Existence, rather, he becomes receptive towards the currents of Existence. He becomes a womb and is ready to contain Existence within himself. He begins to accept and stops all resistance. His state becomes one of total acceptability. This willingness, total willingness is the characteristic of the Female-Consciousness.

One last question: One friend has asked a small question.

Question 6

THE QUESTION IS: CAN THE COMMON MAN ACQUIRE THE CAPABILITY OF EGOLESSNESS?

From his question it seems it is not possible for an ordinary person, whereas the fact is, it is very difficult for an un-ordinary person to attain egolessness. The very meaning of un-ordinary is egoistic. But it is not attained by the ordinary ordinary. It is attained by the extraordinary ordinary. The ordinary ordinary, I call him, who is looked upon as ordinary generally but who does not consider himself ordinary. The extraordinarily ordinary I call him who even though the world looks upon him as extraordinary, considers himself to be ordinary.

I travelled all over the country for 10-12 years and met thousands of people. Many of them would come and tell me that what I said would not be understood by ordinary people. I would then ask the person if he understood and he invariably said he did but he was sure the ordinary man would not. I would then tell him that it was years that I had been going about and not once has the ordinary man come along who would say he did not understand, that he was an ordinary person. I would ask him to bring the ordinary man so that I may see him!

No man considers himself ordinary. Everyone considers himself extraordinary. This is Ego. If man knows and accepts himself to be ordinary, Ego will leave him. All men are ordinary.

All men are ordinary, no one is extraordinary. Only one person can be termed extraordinary – the one who becomes aware or his ordinariness. Our mind refuses to believe that we are ordinary. In a thousand ways we try to assure ourselves that there is no one like us, there never can be. We never try to explain to ourselves, how we reached this conclusion. What is the qualification, what is so special, so distinctive about us? Nothing – but the mind refuses to believe for as soon as I accept this fact, the journey upwards stops.

There is a reason behind my considering myself extraordinary. When I consider myself extraordinary then my place, my position and surroundings all become unworthy of me. My rightful place is above and not where I am. The world does not know this and creates barricades or else I would reach the place where I belong. I shall not rest content till I reach my rightful place. But I shall never attain this rightful place for the simple reason that wherever I reach, that place will become ordinary and my extraordinary place will shift yet further up! Ego can rise only when it believes that its place is further up and not down. This is the chemistry of the flight of the ego.

Lao Tzu says that if you were to know for certain and accept the fact that you are ordinary you are nobody. nothing, you will not try to rise up as soon as the thought of ordinariness spreads over the mind. You will begin to feel that perhaps you are not worthy of the place you are standing upon, perhaps you are committing an excess. You then begin to step back and back till you reach a place where you can go no further back. You will reach a place that no one wants to occupy, where there is no one to be jealous of your position and no one to push you out of it. Lao Tzu says, ”Then that very day you attain the extraordinary life.”

If God is not attained by even such a one who has become so humble then all talk of God is nothing but trash. If even such a person who has become so empty does not behold perfection then perfection can never be beheld. Do not think how an ordinary person can attempt to become egoless. Every man is ordinary and every man can do it. But each of us is under the illusion that he is extraordinary. This illusion has to be broken.

And Lao Tzu does not exhort you to break this illusion. He only says if you do not break it, you shall suffer. You do not want to suffer but you take good care of your maladies lest they leave you. Then you suffer and then you go about wailing how miserable you are! We are not prepared to leave the things that trouble us. The knot of the ego is the root cause of all our woes. To know oneself as the most ordinary of ordinaries is the cure of all ills.

Try out this experiment. Become ordinary for twenty-four hours. Let only one thought be within you for those twenty-four hours that I am an ordinary person. I am nothing. After these twenty-four hours you will never want to be extraordinary again. The glimpse of bliss that you will get in this ordinariness would be one beyond your imagination. This glimpse is always available to us but we are so stiff with our arrogance of being extraordinary, special! How can we experience this flash of joy when we sit with all the doors and windows closed? Get down from your throne. The mystery of life cannot be unfolded on the gilded throne of the ego. What is attained on the ordinary rough and dusty path of humility can never be attained on the gilded peaks of the ego.

Enough for today.